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Shock defeat for Tories in fishing vote

Government loses by two votes

DONALD MACINTYRE
Political Editor

Tory divisions over Europe were once again brutally exposed last night when the Government suffered the humiliation of a Commons defeat by 299-297 votes over fishery quotas.

The vote is a severe embarrassment for the Prime Minister, John Major, at a time when he had hoped to have united his party at the beginning of the long haul towards a general election in 1996 or 1997.

The Government defeat by the wafer-thin majority came despite a strongly worded appeal by Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, to the Tory rebels not to "compromise" by lining up with Labour against the Government.

Although the vote is unlikely to make any lasting impact on government policy, Douglas Hogg, the Minister of Agriculture, said last night he would "give due weight" to the Commons vote in negotiating fishing cuts ordered by the EU.

The decision came after an acrimonious debate over European Commission proposals - to be discussed by European fishing ministers in Brussels tomorrow - which would mean significant cuts in fishing quotas next year.

In a bid to stave off the rebellion, Tony Baldry, the fisheries minister, last night announced the restoration of £4m a year in grants to fishing ports and Spanish agreement to a £100,000 compensation payment to British fishermen for Spanish incursions into British waters.

Bitter divisions between pro-Europeans and Eurosceptics in the party were exposed after John Townend, the Thatcherite

MP for Bridlington, said the Government could not be blamed for the betrayal of the fishing industry by Sir Edward Heath. Sir Edward retorted that Mr Townend should be "ashamed" of "degrading" himself by his abusive remarks.

Last night's vote came after the Government had faced opposition within its own ranks to proposed fishery quotas from two distinct sections of the party: MPs with coastal constituencies seriously perturbed



Sir Edward Heath: 'betrayed fishing industry'

at new quotas proposed by the commission, and Eurosceptics committed to seeking withdrawal from the European Common Fisheries Policy.

Proposed new cuts in quotas will mean a 30 per cent reduction in herring, mackerel, and plaice catches. Although cod, haddock and saithe quotas will remain stable, the Government has acknowledged there will be a "significant cut" in North Sea whiting catches.

The Government had already underlined how keen it had been to avoid a defeat - by announcing a reprieve of £12m

in harbour, marketing and processing grants over three years which had been cut as a result of the most recent public spending round. Mr Forsyth, who has special credibility with the Eurosceptics, was put up to open the debate instead of Douglas Hogg, the more pro-European Agriculture Minister.

Both the main parties had earlier made strenuous efforts to maximise their votes - bringing back MPs from abroad and appealing to ill MPs to come to the House of Commons. Labour MPs including Roland Boyes, who is unwell, and John Fraser, who has been in traction as a result of a car crash, were both brought into vote.

The Liberal Democrats, both the two nationalist parties, the SDLP and the Democratic Unionist Party - whose leader, Ian Paisley, launched an impassioned attack on the impact on the EU of the fishery industry - all voted against the Government. The Ulster Unionists, whose leader, David Trimble, met John Major yesterday to discuss the northern Ireland peace process, left it until late in the day to decide how to vote.

There were signs that the mood among the most entrenched Eurosceptics had hardened over the last 24 hours with some planning to use the vote partly as a means of demonstrating their anxiety at the confirmation of a timetable and name for the single currency at the Madrid summit.

Despite Britain having the right to opt-out from the single currency, Eurosceptics have registered dismay at Mr Major's refusal to rule out British membership of monetary union in the next Parliament.

Ashby faces ruin after libel case



David Ashby MP yesterday after failing in his suit against the Sunday Times

Photograph: Geraint Lewis

REBECCA FOWLER
and PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES

David Ashby, the Tory MP, faces financial and personal ruin after a jury in effect branded him "a liar, a hypocrite and a homosexual" by finding against him in his libel case against the *Sunday Times* and Andrew Neil, its former editor.

Mr Ashby, 55, sobbed when the jury delivered their major verdict at the High Court, following five hours of deliberation. He faces a future which could see the end of his political career, the division of his family and potential bankruptcy, with legal costs of up to £500,000.

During the three-week trial, Mr Ashby had poured out the most intimate details of his private life, lambasted his estranged wife Silvana Ashby, 53, who had repeatedly alleged he was homosexual, and persuaded Alexandra, 27, their daughter, to give evidence against her mother.

In a dramatic exchange after the jury delivered its verdict, Mrs Ashby walked over to her distraught husband at the front of the courtroom, placed an arm around him and reached down to kiss him. "Leave me," he wept, pushing her away through his tears.

Afterwards Mrs Ashby issued a statement. "It gives me no pleasure to see my husband lose an expensive libel action, I hope it will not have a terri-

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ble effect on him. On numerous occasions I asked him to think twice before continuing with the litigation... the last thing I wanted was to involve Alex, our daughter."

Mrs Ashby, a Roman Catholic, said she was unsure if she and her husband would divorce. She plans to spend Christmas with Alexandra, who works as a stockbroker in Italy, and was unaware of Mr Ashby's plans.

Mr Ashby, MP for Leicestershire North West since 1983, sued the *Sunday Times* over allegations he was a homosexual who had deceitfully presented himself as a married family man and supported the Tory Back to Basics campaign which upheld traditional family values.

Although the newspaper admitted it was wrong to suggest Mr Ashby had shared a bed with a man on holiday in Goa, India, it maintained he was a homosexual. He was accused of having an affair with Dr. Claran Kilduff, 32, who was his neighbour after he separated from his wife in 1993.

The newspaper welcomed the jury's decision yesterday, but said the trial had turned into a "ghastly family tragedy", and indicated executives would consider being lenient in calling on Mr Ashby to pay costs. The newspaper is understood to have paid a nominal fee of less than £1,000 into court for damages to Mr Ashby.

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Ministers knew about jail squalor months ago

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Ministers were warned months ago about appalling conditions in Holloway jail but failed to halt the decline, which prompted the unprecedented walk-out by the Chief Inspector of Prisons.

The Board of Visitors at Britain's biggest women prison wrote earlier this year, warning of staff shortages, squalor, inmates locked in their cells for up to 23 hours a day and inhumane treatment. Their message was said to have been repeated to Ann Widdowcombe, the Prisons Minister, when she visited the jail in July.

Yesterday it was alleged one pregnant prisoner had been shackled to a male officer while undergoing an anti-natal ex-

amination, as part of the "over-zealous security" regime that was identified by the Chief Inspector before he halted the inspection and demanded emergency action.

Holloway sources said General Sir David Ramsbotham was horrified by the infestation of rats, cockroaches and lice in the jail and by parcels of faeces and food thrown from windows and left to rot. Sir David, who only took up the post earlier this month, was said to have been shocked also by the lack of visible care for the large numbers of vulnerable women among the 500 strong population - the mentally ill, the abused and foreign nationals.

Yesterday 16 extra staff were drafted in to help with a crisis in staffing, which has led to what

has been described as, on occasion, a "virtual lock-down". Janet King, the governor, has apparently requested 66 extra staff. Staff were said to be exhausted, were owed 4,000 hours off in lieu of extra work, and were dogged by ill-health.

It was suggested the Inspector had already identified management failings, which may undermine the governor's role.

Yesterday Richard Tilt, acting director general, said there was "no excuse" for filthy conditions. There are also concerns at the over-emphasis on security, introduced by the governor after the Parkhurst and White-moor escapes. The Learmont inquiry itself questioned the degree of security under which women were being held, recommending accommodation



"being run as self-contained homes". But the opposition yesterday said cuts of more than 13 per cent over the next three years would only make problems worse. Labour's prisons spokesman, Gerald Howarth, said: "With a prison population at over 52,500 and set to rise to over 56,000 in the next six to 12 months, the Prison Service is facing a crisis."

Shocking sight, Page 2

Rugby's £87m deal gives Murdoch transfer veto

DAVE HADFIELD

Rupert Murdoch's influence over British sport has assumed a new and threatening shape with the revelation that leading players in rugby league's Super League - which kicks off next March - will not be able to change clubs without the permission of News Corporation.

A copy of the "loyalty" agreement signed by dozens of Britain's top players in preparation for the launch of the Super League reveals that Mr Murdoch's News Corporation, which has pumped £87m into the game here, has a veto over who goes where.

Sky Television already tailors kick-off times and fixture dates in Premiership football to its needs. But the extent of Mr

Murdoch's control of Britain's second-best supported team game has emerged as much greater. Already the sport, which celebrated its centenary this year, has been switched to a summer season, and there are fears that plans to merge clubs, abandoned in the face of supporters' protests earlier this year, may be revived.

It is clear the organisation will be able to control players' movements. The second clause of the contract, which has come into the hands of the *Independent*, reads: "You will not modify, amend or terminate your contract with the club or waive any of its provisions without News' prior written consent."

This, as some clubs have discovered when they have come to negotiate transfers, gives the

organisation the power to block a move of which it disapproves - possibly because it threatens to make a strong club even stronger, or because it removes a draw-card player from a team heavily dependent on him.

When players, including virtually the whole first-team squad at the champion club Wigan and a scattering elsewhere, signed the contracts earlier this year they were thought to be agreeing only not to join the Australian Rugby League, which is still locked in conflict with Mr Murdoch for control of the game in the Southern hemisphere. In fact, the clause goes much further, giving News International a degree of control over the game's internal market.

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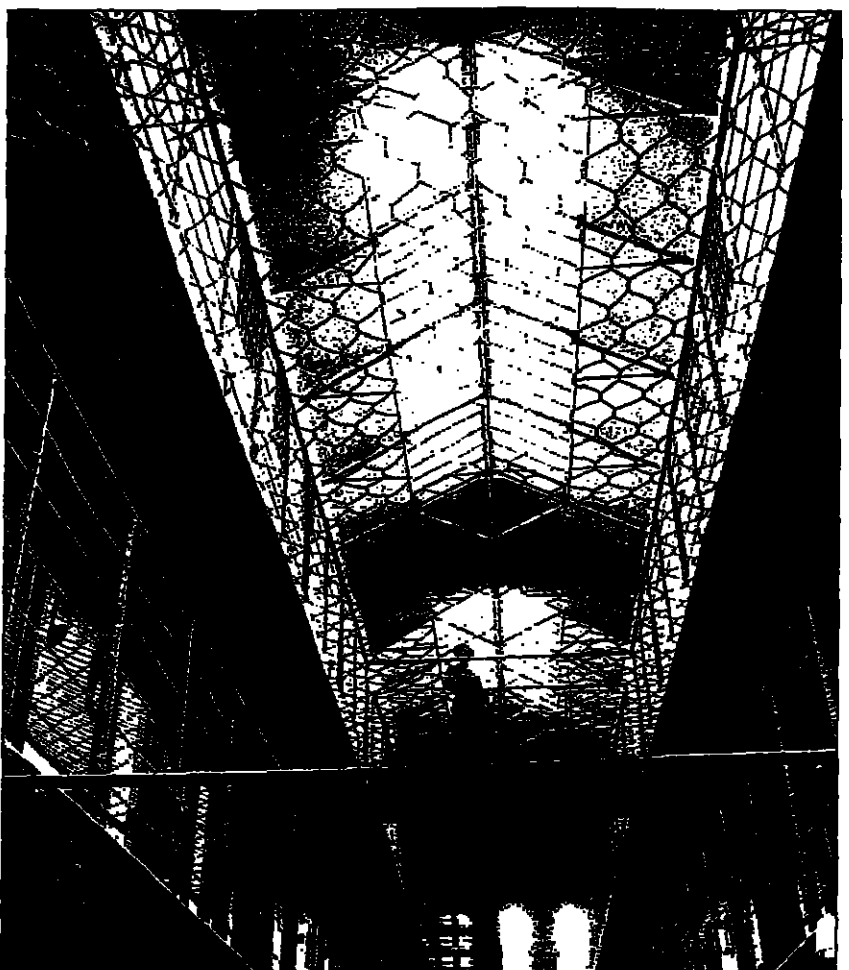
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news

Scandal of Holloway: Prisons' inspectorate shocked by vermin, filth and inmates afflicted with head lice

Sickening sight of rat-infested jail



Faces of Holloway: Inside Britain's largest women's prison and (right) Kathleen Mackay, 27, a pregnant inmate who was taken from the jail to hospital when she feared that her labour pains had started. She remained manacled even while she played with her baby nephew

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

One of the most sickening images of Holloway jail for the new Chief Inspector of Prisons was watching a rat, which was so huge it could not fit into one of the traps set to catch the vermin.

He was appalled that women inmates had headlice but were unable to get the medicated shampoo needed to rid them on the problem.

He was shocked at the parcels of faeces, food and used tampons rotting in courtyards outside cell windows - hurled there by prisoners with no litter bins and no access to working toilets.

But squalor was only one aspect of life in Britain's largest women's jail that prompted General Sir David Ramsbotham

to pull his 11-strong inspection team out of the Victorian jail in protest at the conditions and prompting a major political row.

He was, according to sources at the prison, ashamed at the lack of care and treatment of many of the jail's vulnerable prisoners - the mentally ill, the abused, foreign nationals and pregnant women. He is also to be told of allegations that one pregnant woman was shackled to a male prison warder, while having anti-natal examinations. Another was said to have been exposed to a male officer while showering.

Holloway uses "closet chains" - tied round the ankles but of sufficient length to pass under a lavatory door, supposedly to afford women a degree of dignity. Yesterday one work-

er in the jail said that no women were allowed out of the jail, even on hospital visits, without being chained - no matter how petty the crime. "Overzealous security" was one of the major shortfalls the 11 inspectors identified in their four days in the jail, before Sir David pulled them out.

One woman who was released from Holloway earlier this year, but who asked not to be named for legal reasons said: "You would not believe what was happening to women in there."

Locked in their cells for hours on end - most were "banged up from 3.30 in the afternoon until the next morning" - many were "cutting up" or harming themselves.

There have been two suicides in the jail in the past six months.

The 38-year-old woman said that no glass was allowed into the jail, so women were mutilating themselves on nails pulled out of walls or even on sharp hard lumps of paint on radiators and were also gouging their faces or scratching their arms and legs.

"They are given pills to make them sleep and others to control them in the day." There were often fights and bullying.

She herself said that she had written to the Home Office on her release complaining of conditions in the jail.

Women can spend up to 23 hours a day locked in their cells. Education, work and out of cell association and activities have been severely cut back.

Some of the jail's problems - as identified by Anne Widdi-

come, the Prison Minister - are due to a massive staff shortage. And those officers who are working in the jail are, according to Chris Tchaikovsky, director of Women in Prison, literally dropping on their feet, through stress and overwork.

They are owed 4,000 hours time off in lieu, which they cannot take and on any one day up to 30 will be off sick.

But critics say poor management at all levels and the concentration of unnecessary security has exacerbated the problem. One prison officer said: "I did not join the service to lock women in their cells all day."

But the full effects of the chaos in Holloway goes much further, adding considerably to the misery and stress of inmates.

Lack of staff means prisoner get to their visits late, reducing essential and vital time with their families. Visits with lawyers have been similarly affected, leaving women with the belief that they are being denied justice.

Women are not receiving clothes parcels and reduced canteen and welfare services. "We have women here with literally no underwear, deportees with no clothes" said one welfare worker at the jail.

One former inmate, Karen Stott, a 36-year-old mother, released from Holloway last month, said: "It's very tense in there, there's a lot of people with mental problems who are not getting the right help, they just put them on medication."

"It's filthy, it's not cleaned

property, there's nothing for the women to do, there's not even any books to pick up and read, it's nearly all 24-hour lock up all the time."

Emma Humphries, recently freed from Holloway by the Court of Appeal after her conviction for killing her violent partner was reduced to manslaughter, said: "Conditions were appalling particularly if you were mentally or physically ill. You were left all day with very little care or attention, locked in your cell and treated like animals."

She said with some notable exceptions man staff treated prisoners as "sub-human".

The welfare worker said: "So many of these problems are so easily preventable and, I think it was that, which really got to the prison inspectors."



Sir David: Appalled by what he saw at Holloway

Inspector 'Rambo', a man for radical solutions

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY

Sir David Ramsbotham's reaction to conditions in Holloway - pulling out his inspection team until conditions were improved, the first time a Chief Inspector of Prisons has taken such action - fits his background and character.

His nickname "Rambo" has nothing to do with his appearance: like many generals, he is

wiry and donnish, almost ascetic. But he has a reputation for extremely blunt speaking and radical solutions to problems. The conditions in Holloway appalled his military instinct for cleanliness and order, and like any military commander, he was acutely sensitive to the well-being and morale of his team.

Sir David began as an officer in the Royal Green Jackets,

a regiment with a reputation for turning out generals, but also for being unorthodox. He was the

Army's Director of Public Relations during the Falklands conflict and weighed in the arguments on the handling of the media which followed. For a senior officer, he was known to be unusually open with the press. In a recent paper, he described the media as a potential weapon, and like any

weapon, one to be used with precision and skill.

His last Army job was Adjutant-General - the Army's head of personnel, but one of its top posts. Sir David oversaw the formation of the Adjutant General's Corps, combining many of the Army's supporting services, including the Royal Military Police, his only direct experience of dealing with any law-enforcement agency be-

fore his present appointment.

Educated at Haileybury College and Cambridge University, he was Aide-de-Camp General to the Queen from 1990 to 1993.

After leaving the Army, Sir David worked closely with the UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, on a study into a permanent intervention force for the UN. He authored several papers on the UN, and recommended the UN Charter

be rewritten, because it did not fit with the realities of the new world order.

In his new role he is determined to be his own man. In an interview recently he said: "If I start fudging, then I am not doing my job. I shall be very critical, but I hope constructive. I am not going to respond to party political pressure, I am going to do my job as I see fit."

Steel row hits Ulster talks

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

A pre-Christmas meeting between John Major and John Bruton in Dublin to boost the peace process is in the balance today over a row between Ireland and Britain over European Union subsidies for the Irish steel industry.

The Irish Prime Minister was described as "incandescent" with anger over a threat by the British to veto the EU subsidies at a meeting today in Brussels of trade and industry ministers.

Mr Bruton privately accused the British of being driven by ideology, and made it clear that he would not meet Mr Major if the British government refused to let the subsidies go ahead. British ministers have privately complained about the Irish using the peace process as a lever for the subsidies.

The issue threatens to sour the meeting in Dublin which was intended as an informal goodwill trip by Mr Major at Mr Bruton's invitation to show unity after the differences over IRA decommissioning.

Downing Street was refusing to speculate on whether the visit planned for tomorrow would go ahead. Officials on both sides were engaged in hard last-minute bargaining to reach a compromise.

British ministers have objected to the subsidy because it would hit British Steel's Shelton plant in Stoke with alleged unfair competition. The Irish have denied that charge, insisting that the EU aid is needed to allow a steel plant near Cork to be privatised.

Meanwhile, Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland secretary, is backing the idea of holding elections to a new body in Ulster next year to appoint negotiating teams for all-party peace talks, including Sinn Féin.

Sir Patrick believes it could be a way out of the impasse if the international body under Senator George Mitchell fails to find a way to begin the decommissioning of IRA and loyalist paramilitary weapons. He is seeking the support of the SDLP who have resisted the idea, which has been promoted by the Ulster Unionists.

Council moved family 34 times

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

The London Borough of Lambeth has been told to pay £6,000 compensation to a homeless family with seven children who were moved 34 times before the council finally found them a permanent home after a wait of more than five years.

Between June 1989 and September 1994 the family lived in bed-and-breakfast accommodation at 34 hotels in eight London boroughs from Hackney to Westminster and Croydon.

Save for short periods, the children received no formal education at all during that period, and Lambeth should set aside £3,000 each for remedial education for the four youngest children, Edward Osmotherley, the Local Government Ombudsman, has recommended.

Mr Porter - not his real name - and his family have suffered "a very serious injustice", Mr Osmotherley said, adding that the loss of education for the children as they moved round London was one he viewed "very seriously".

Lambeth council said yesterday that it would accept the ombudsman's verdict, which includes a finding of maladministration for failing to process four housing benefit claims made by Mr Porter over the two years to April 1992.

The council told the ombudsman that the family had to move so often partly because of complaints from hoteliers. But Mr Osmotherley said: "It cannot be any surprise that problems arose when so many children were crammed into bed-and-breakfast accommodation."

Mr Porter - who is illiterate - had warned the council that the repeated moves were disrupting the children's education. Mr Osmotherley said: "It is clear that the very large numbers of moves and the distance between some hotels must effectively have prevented the children receiving proper education."

Had the council tackled the case properly, for example by combining properties or splitting the household, it should have been possible to make the family a reasonable offer within two years, not five, he said.

IN BRIEF

Man in court on charity theft charge

A former adviser to the Salvation Army appeared in court yesterday charged with stealing £853,000 from the charity.

Stuart Christopher Ford, 44, of Stretford, Birmingham, faced 23 charges of theft from the client account of Edge and Ellison, a Birmingham firm of solicitors, in 1992.

Mr Ford had been involved in an investment programme for the charity. The prosecution alleges he used Salvation Army money to clear personal debts. He was granted conditional bail to reappear by Bow Street magistrates.

Meningitis 'freak'

Doctors are trying to establish how the parents of a seven-week-old baby who died from meningitis have also become infected in a case so rare it is called "like being struck by lightning". The unidentified couple were said to be "improving" in Newcastle General hospital.

A&E units 'in crisis'

Some hospitals are facing an unprecedented crisis because of soaring emergency admissions, says a report published by the National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts (NAHAT) and the British Association of Medical Managers (BAMM). Emergency admissions rose in England by 13 per cent in the four years to mid-1994, with a similar trend in Scotland, with many hospitals having to juggle beds, cancel operations even close emergency admissions for days to cope.

£10m drugs haul

Five people were being questioned after drugs worth £10m, including a consignment of ecstasy tablets, were seized at Burtonwood service station on the M62 in Cheshire following a six-month operation by police and customs. Three men were arrested at the scene, one at Manchester airport another in Liverpool.

Road grants cut

The amount of grant from the Department of Transport to local authorities for road and other transport schemes has been reduced by 13 per cent for 1995/6. Local authorities will now receive £960m compared with £1,100m last year which will result in many local road schemes having to be shelved.

Embryo reprieve

Scores of frozen embryos due to be destroyed in July next year have been reprieved following a review by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority of current practice. New regulations will mean that embryos can now be stored for 10 years or longer, in exceptional circumstances, rather than the current five-year limit.

Greenwich review

An advisory body has been set up by the Government to review proposals for the Royal Naval College at Greenwich, south-east London, and narrow the contestants to a short-list.

Death plunge

Police in Tokyo launched an inquiry into the apparent suicide of a British businessman who fell to his death from an office window before a meeting. Geoffrey Till, 37, of Wilney, Oxfordshire, sales chief of Unipart Industries, died instantly.

Slough train to China

Printed timetables available at Reading railway station are advertising an 8.25am Sunday service via Slough, in Berkshire, to Outer Mongolia. Great Western Trains blamed a clerical error.

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Why a fear of spiders is all in the genes

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

Fear of spiders is an evolutionary hangup from the days when our ancestors knew that a single bite could prove fatal, say scientists who are developing a new theory for the origin of certain phobias.

Just as there are short, tall, fat and thin people, so there are

those who, because of some genetic component, have a much stronger fear of spiders.

"It is a biological fear which can occur during normal development and doesn't go away," according to Dr Ross McMenies, director of the anxiety disorder clinic at Sydney University in Australia.

"This fear would have entered the gene pool because in

certain areas of the world there are dangerous spiders and fear of them would be a good thing," he said.

Dr McMenies said that fear of water, heights and snakes are other examples of biological fears which may be built into an individual's psyche. Fear of snakes, for example, in people who live on snake-free islands and who have not travelled or

ever seen a live snake, is well documented.

Dr McMenies, who presented the results of his research to the British Psychological Society Conference yesterday, analysed three groups: 15 under-graduate students who claimed to be scared of spiders; 19 men and women with a clinical level of arachnophobia, and a control group of "non-fearfuls".

The "fearfuls" claimed no adverse experience with spiders as children - previously believed to be the origin of such phobia - and said they had always been scared since their first contact.

"They didn't ever remember a time when they weren't scared of spiders," Dr McMenies said. Paradoxically, three of the non-fearful subjects had been bitten by spiders.

Senior Tories earn reprieve for Oflot chief

CHRIS BLACKHURST and COLIN BROWN

Senior Cabinet ministers warned Virginia Bottomley not to sack Peter Davis, the National Lottery regulator, over accepting free flights from a company involved in running the lottery.

Mrs Bottomley announced her decision to back him last night and one reason for government support was believed to be to avoid giving in to media pressure for his resignation. It would also have been seen as a blot on the lottery's success.

The Secretary of State for National Heritage avoided an embarrassing Commons statement, but issued a statement after a meeting with Mr Davis. She said there was never any doubt about his integrity, although she had warned him it was unwise to take the free flights in America from GTECH, a stakeholder in Camelot, the lottery organiser.

Mrs Bottomley said he had assured her there were "no other issues" which might come to light later that might affect her decision. But she told him to maintain "a proper distance

from the company and its constituent parts" in future.

Her vote of confidence was challenged by opposition leaders last night. Robert Maclennan, the Liberal Democrat heritage spokesman, said: "Mr Davis is not fit to regulate a million-pound business if he cannot regulate his own behaviour."

News of Mr Davis's reprieve came as fresh revelations raised further questions about the regulation of the lottery. He refused to insert a clause in Camelot's licence giving him the ability to cap its earnings.

When the company's licence was drawn up last year, it was based on predictions of sales of £3bn. In fact, Camelot is forecasting sales of around £5bn.

At the time, Mr Davis rejected including a clause allowing the percentage taken by the company to be revised downwards if the lottery did better than expected. In an interview broadcast on BBC TV's *Newsnight* last month, Mr Davis admitted dropping the idea: "Had we offered them a licence, the financial terms of which could have been changed at the whim of the regulator, then

frankly we wouldn't have had any reputable companies applying for the licence."

An Oflot spokeswoman said yesterday it was true sales had exceeded expectations but there was no prospect of revising Camelot's contract. The terms of the licence, she said, would stand until the licence expired in 2001.

Meanwhile 25 MPs continued to put Camelot under the spotlight by signing an early day motion condemning plans by the operator to sell lists of its winners to junk mail firms. Under the Data Protection Act,

holders of computerised personal details must declare what they plan to do with the data. Camelot has registered under the category "trading in personal information".

This does not relate to the company's databases for shopkeepers who carry its terminals or its personnel records, which are covered by separate entries.

The motion tabled by Mr Maclennan, condemns the possible sale as "a potential infringement upon the privacy of winners", and says it "will cause a great deal of distress to those who wish to withhold their

identity from the public domain".

Ian Young of Manches, a firm of London solicitors with a large data protection practice, said Camelot had "showed they could sell information if they felt so minded. It does not mean they can do it now but one day they may want to".

A Camelot spokeswoman said trading in personal information not only covers selling lists "but also incidental information collected for other purposes". Camelot, she said, had no intention of selling the names of prize-winners.



Peter Davis: Backed to avoid victory for media

Ashby libel case: Threat of bankruptcy adds to politician's woes after trial that exposed stormy private life to glare of publicity

MP left to ponder folly of a legal nightmare

REBECCA FOWLER

It may be one of the most foolhardy libel actions ever taken. As a tear-stained David Ashby pushed his way through the crowds outside the High Court yesterday, he must have wondered why he had seen fit to jeopardise his family, political career and financial security.

In the three-week court drama, that sank to absurd and tragic depths, Mr Ashby exposed every detail of his private life, from his sexual impotence to adoration of his garden pond, condemned his wife as an obsessive, spiteful and foul-mouthed woman, risked bankruptcy and still failed to convince the jury that he was not a homosexual, a liar and a hypocrite.

The decline and fall of Mr Ashby, a grammar-school boy from High Wycombe, is a bewildering tale of misguided pride and self-deceit. For nearly three decades he enjoyed an unspectacular public life as a barrister and in local government before rising to the backbenches of Westminster as Tory MP for Leicestershire North West in 1983. Although his marriage was always fiery, his career was pedestrian.

The most notable controversies in his political life were a call for a golf ban on Wimbledon Common in 1984 after his Italian wife, Silvana, was hit on the nose by an errant ball, and a telling off for writing Christmas cards during a House of Commons committee session. His spectacular arrival in the spotlight came as a wave of

sleaze allegations against Tory MPs began to make a public mockery of John Major's "Back to Basics" campaign. The *Sunday Times* revealed that he had shared a double bed with Dr Claran Kilduff, 32, his neighbour, at a hotel in France - the Chateau Tilques in Orme - when twin-bedded rooms were available for the same price.

When Mr Ashby left his wife in 1993 after 28 "tempestuous" years of marriage, he said he was depressed, ill and desperate for friendship, and he found it in a man. "I can honestly say I had no one. I'd spent a life being isolated... I'd been isolated from my family because of my wife's attitude, and from friends."

While searching for a flat to escape his miserable home life, he met Dr Kilduff in his garden. Apparently he provided a sympathetic listening ear, and the two men immediately struck up a friendship. Shortly afterwards Mr Ashby bought the flat above Dr Kilduff's, and his wife's suspicions were aroused, although both men have consistently denied they are homosexual.

They agreed to go to France together on the understanding, according to Mr Ashby, they shared a room to save money.

Already the Tory party had hunched from one humiliating sleaze scandal to another. As one Tory MP affair was revealed after another, it became clear the party had placed itself in the line of its own fire with "Back to Basics". Tim Yeo, the MP, exposed as the father of an illegitimate child, was the first to fall in a flush of exposés.



The politician's wife: Silvana Ashby being interviewed by reporters outside the High Court yesterday after the verdict was announced

With the spotlight on the domestic lives of Tory MPs, Chateau Tilques was already Mr Ashby's downfall. When the *Sunday Times* received anonymous phone calls in 1993 alleging that he was gay, and had left his wife to live close to Dr Kilduff in south-west London, the paper saw the next sleaze scandal in its reach.

A senior reporter was immediately sent to Mrs Ashby's home, also in Putney, to put the allegations to her. Although Mrs Ashby denies she in any way gave information, she could not deny the facts being put to her.

When the story broke, Mr Ashby was besieged by jour-

nalists at the family home, with Mrs Ashby and Alexandra, 27, their daughter, who flew over from Milan where she works as a stockbroker.

According to Mrs Ashby, her husband desperately appealed to her to go out and issue a statement saying she was a liar, and she had made the story up. Mrs Ashby remained at her husband's side, but refused to lie for him.

"He said 'I've got a solution to get rid of all those people, you just have to go and say you've made a terrible mistake, that you've been lying, that you're a very vengeful and spiteful, and the reason these things came out is because you're very sorry I left you.' Mrs Ashby said. "I said 'Really David there's a limit to what I will do.'"

Not only was Mr Ashby left to justify himself, a journalist had recovered the bill for the hotel room at Chateau Tilques from the dustbin at his Putney flat. In typical bombastic style, Mr Ashby went on the defensive, dismissing suggestions he was having an affair with Dr Kilduff as "tripe".

But the *Sunday Times* was eager not to let the scandal it had set in motion out of its grasp. Although Mr Ashby was not a high-profile figure, in the political climate his alleged hypocrisy was the perfect scandal. It received another up-off

Family at war, Section Two

that Mr Ashby had travelled to Goa on holiday, and again shared a bed with a man.

This time the anonymous source proved less effective. Despite confusing evidence from various staff at the hotel, described as a discreet love nest where few questions were asked, it emerged Mr Ashby had indeed travelled there alone.

Mr Ashby saw his chance for revenge. If the newspaper had unearthed the right story, it had tripped over the wrong facts. In an act that sealed his fate, he decided to take both the *Sunday Times* and Andrew Neil, the former editor, to court.

Comment, page 15

MP wins libel damages

Tory MP Peter Bottomley was yesterday awarded £40,000 damages by a High Court jury for libel in an article in the *Sunday Express*.

Justin Walford, legal adviser to Express Newspapers, which was also ordered to pay an estimated £250,000 costs of the eight-day trial, said an appeal was being considered because of questions raised over press freedom.

Mr Bottomley, 51, MP for Ebbw Vale in south Wales, was accused in the article last January of betraying paratrooper Private

Lee Clegg, who was in jail for the murder of a jowriter in Northern Ireland, by appearing at a meeting with the Sinn Féin leader Martin McGuinness.

The former Northern Ireland minister whose wife, Virginia, is Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, said yesterday: "It would have been possible to have avoided this writ if we had come to some agreement earlier on. I don't mind robust criticism... but this stopped me doing what I have devoted my life to - ending the violence in Northern Ireland."

Mensa board 'kept in dark'

WILL BENNETT

Senior members of Mensa did not know that Harold Gale, the society's executive director, was using his position to run his own business activities from its headquarters, an industrial tribunal was told yesterday.

Kenneth Sutton, secretary of British Mensa, said that its directors were aware that he had a company called Harold Gale Associates but did not know the extent of his activities.

Mr Gale, 54, who held office for 19 years, was sacked for gross misconduct last March after officers of the society for people with high IQs raided its headquarters in Wolverhampton. He is alleging unfair dis-

missal at the tribunal in Birmingham.

Mensa says that Mr Gale made thousands of pounds by using his position to increase subscriptions to a magazine called *Mind Games* run by his own company and that he sold puzzles to newspapers who thought that they were buying them from the society.

Malcolm Duthie, representing Mr Gale, told the tribunal yesterday that Mensa's directors knew about his private business activities because they both used a Mr Nigel Tinsley as their accountant.

He said: "Nigel Tinsley was the accountant for Harold Gale Associates and British Mensa Ltd. He did the end of the year

accounts for both and would have to liaise with Mr Neil Goulder, the treasurer of the British Mensa Committee."

Mr Duthie asked Mr Sutton: "You said *Mind Games* was tolerated because it was believed to be an outside activity?"

Mr Sutton replied: "All the directors were aware of Harold Gale Associates and all knew the flyers were put out for *Mind Games* with the information packs."

"But Harold Gale was an executive and should be working in our best interests at all times. None were aware of him producing any puzzles for his own benefit."

Mr Duthie asked Mr Sutton: "If you had known Mr Gale had

operated a company that had produced puzzles for profit using Mensa's name in a mutually beneficial relationship would it have altered your consideration of this matter?"

He replied: "I don't think I would ever allow that kind of position to occur because it is a direct conflict of interest. I don't think any such operation could have been mutually beneficial."

Mr Duthie revealed that Sir Clive Sinclair, the inventor who is Mensa's chairman, was a director of Thought Promotions, a company set up by Mr Gale in 1982. He told the tribunal it was set up to make a profit for Mr Gale but used the Mensa name to promote the society.



Harold Gale: Accused of using office for own profit

Mr Sutton said he was not aware of the deal but accepted that Sir Clive must have had "full knowledge" that Mr Gale set up the firm.

The tribunal continues today.

Army officer's flight to golf course lands him in hot water

CHRIS BLACKHURST Westminster Correspondent

A senior army officer who took a military helicopter to fly to a golf tournament - and sent his clubs by chauffeur-driven car - has been disciplined by the Ministry of Defence.

In June, Lieutenant-Colonel Douglas Connon, commanding officer, 3rd Highlanders, booked an army gazelle helicopter to take him and a colleague to a VE Day celebration and then to an inter-regimental golf competition. The VE ceremony took place only 40 miles from Lt-Col Connon's home in Nairn.

There was no room in the helicopter for their clubs, so Lt-Col Connon's driver took them the 220 miles from Nairn to the golf course in Prestwick by car. The helicopter, which belonged to the Army Air Corps, cost £2,000 per hour to run.


The driver returned to Prestwick two days later to take the men home. Lt-Col Connon, who had won the tournament the previous year, returned in triumph, successfully defending his title.

Nicholas Soames, armed forces minister, said yesterday that the incident had been investigated. He confirmed that "a gazelle helicopter deviated

from its task to take two Army officers to a golf tournament".

Replying to a written question from David Clark, Labour Defence spokesman, Mr Soames said: "There was no dishonest intent" on Lt-Col Connon's part. "He did, however, make an error of judgment".

Mr Clark condemned "a blatant misuse of taxpayers' money". He said such behaviour "appears to be a regular feature in the Tory-run MoD and has no place in the modern army. Poor management and abuse of taxpayers' money are the order of the day and I am disappointed by the Minister's complacent and puny response."



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IAN MacKINNON

Lord Brocket was charged with three others of conspiracy to defraud. It is alleged that

Mr De Silva told the court that bail had been set at £30,000 and Lord Brocket's surety would be arriving from the US today to sign the papers. Judge Rodwell, adjourning the case for

prison but was much more concerned about the welfare of his family. Mr Barker said the hearing in the High Court would involve "family and residential orders being made".



Photograph: Rex Feature

HEATHER MILLS

The MPs said it was wrong in principle for a politician to play a role in what should be a mat-

Abolishing the mandatory life sentence for murder would risk sending a signal to the public at large that causing the death of another person was in some way less seriously regarded than previously," they said.

The mandatory sentence was brought in to reflect public intolerance of murder, when capital punishment was abol-

ished in 1965. At present, anyone convicted of murder must receive a life sentence. The trial judge then makes a suggestion on the minimum period the killer should serve, known as the "tariff". This, with the views of the Lord Chief Justice, is passed to the Home Secretary who decides the term a murderer must serve to satisfy the demands of "retribution and deterrence".

A committee of peers, and an independent committee headed by Lord Lane, the former Lord Chief Justice, have demanded that the compulsory life sentence for murder be abolished. They concluded that

However, the MPs called for more clarity and openness in the system, suggesting that murderers, victims families and the courts are informed of the tar-

ings were "preliminary" and it is to call further evidence before making final recommendations next year.

■ *Murder: The Mandatory Life Sentence*; HMSO; £12.15.

ANDREW BROWN

Traditional translations of the Bible count on the reader's ability to understand a written

Version, this becomes: "Joram asked: 'Is this a peaceful visit?' " "How can there be peace?" Jehu asked. 'Your mother Jezebel has caused everyone to worship idols and to practice

The Dean of Lichfield, Tom Wright, said: "The language reminds me of what happens when someone leading a bible study is trying to summarise for the troops what the passage is really about." However, he said the results could have been stranger. In one recent US translation, King Saul "entered the cave to go to the bathroom."

STEVE BOGGAN

Mr Fitzgerald is a recognised champion of civil liberties. It is understood his fees in Hindley's case have been *minimal*. They are invariably paid by David Astor, 83, editor of the Observer until 1975, who believes that Hindley is treated as a political prisoner in as much as any decision to free her would have to



The Rev Peter Tums, a former governor of Maidstone prison, Kent, who was asked to evaluate Hindley, rejected reports of a well-organised group of people campaigning for her release. "We are just a very loose grouping who feel Hindley is being unfairly treated," he said. "But there is no organisation, no campaign, not even any regular contact."

Legends

Eavan Boland was born in Dublin in 1944 and, on account of her father being a diplomat, grew up in London and New York. She read English at Trinity College, Dublin, and is famed for her reputation in Ireland as a leading poet, reviewer, and broadcaster. Her first poetry collection, *New Territory*, was published in 1967; six more have followed across a broad range of subjects: domestic camcorders of widowhood and motherhood, the complex interaction of Irish history, geography and culture, and, in this instance, the kindling of the old story-telling tradition for a new generation. Eavan Boland's *Collected Poems* are published by Carcanet Press at £9.95.

DT12

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Match 6 (Jackpot)	1	\$8,214,498	\$8,214,498
Match 5 plus bonus ball	23	\$109,892	\$2,527,516
Match 5	214	\$1,728	\$1,579,392
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Passenger services sell-off: Stagecoach, which has overtaken all rivals in 10 years, is to operate South West Trains

Bus-driver couple win first rail line

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

A bus company which has been frequently criticised for its aggressive tactics towards rivals was yesterday awarded the first privatised passenger rail line.

The confirmation that Stagecoach, Britain's biggest bus company, had won the right to operate South West Trains, which runs the domestic services out of Waterloo station in London, was immediately attacked by Labour who called it "a

sad day for Britain's railways". Stagecoach has, however, promised that it will "maintain present service levels", keep fares down and improve the quality of service by imposing more onerous Passenger's Charter targets on itself. The company admitted that there would be no chance of buying new trains for the line because the seven-year franchise term was not long enough to justify the purchase of new rolling stock.

Brian Cox, the company's executive director, said yesterday

he could not guarantee that there would be no cuts to services. The company is only contracted to provide up to the minimum passenger service requirements - 86 per cent of the existing timetable - set by the franchise director, Roger Salmon, and the subject of a partially successful legal action by anti-privatisation campaigners last week. But Mr Cox said Stagecoach "was not in the business of cutting back on services but of building up volumes of passengers."

Stagecoach, created 10 years ago by Brian Souter and his sister, Ann Glog, has built up its business by taking over 30 companies around the country, often using methods which have been criticised by the Office of Fair Trading and the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Brian Wilson, Labour's transport spokesman, said: "It is particularly ironic that privatisation, which began with rhetoric on competition, has ended up with the first franchise going to a ruthlessly anti-

competitive company which has faced 24 inquiries into its predatory behaviour."

At a press conference yesterday, Mr Souter defended his company's record, saying that no one had accused it of running poor services or "of not being innovative". The company admits there will be job losses at SWT but hopes these can be achieved by voluntary redundancies.

Mr Salmon said Stagecoach would require an average £49m subsidy per year, compared with BR's net subsidy last year

of £63.4m for the SWT services. This will be welcomed by the Government, which has always argued that privatisation would lead to savings. But Stagecoach will struggle to achieve it without industrial strife.

Stagecoach said its performance targets for SWT would be higher than the existing ones with punctuality up by 2 per cent to 92 per cent for suburban services and a punctuality target for mainline services of 89 per cent. Reliability targets will go up by 1 per cent to 99 per cent. But

these improvements in targets will only take effect 12 months after the start of the franchise.

Stagecoach also promised to protect fares even though only about 47 per cent of SWT fares, in revenue terms, are safeguarded by the previously announced fare-capping system.

Mr Salmon was unable yesterday to confirm the allocation of the two other early franchises, London, Tilbury and Southend, and Great Western Trains, which are both expected to go to management buyout teams.

National strategy planned for the ageing

GLENDIA COOPER

The first step towards the creation of a national partnership for ageing will be taken today, as the great and the good assemble in London to discuss research on the matter.

Fifty-five key people from the fields of industry, research, policy, funding bodies, consumers and providers will gather at the Royal Society of Medicine to consider policy for an ageing population and how it can be integrated.

The meeting is being moderated by Sir Ronald Oxburgh, Rector of Imperial College, London, and formerly chief scientist at the Ministry of Defence. Representatives from Age Concern, the Red Cross, British Geriatrics Society and World Health Organisation will also be there.

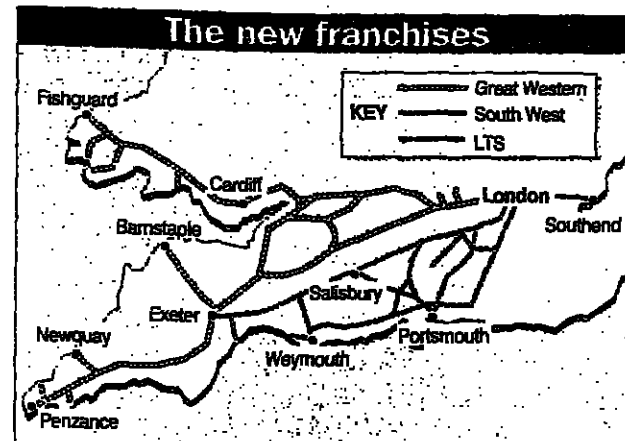
Although Britons are living longer they are getting old, with extra years of disability not healthy life, according to a survey earlier this month which found that healthy life expectancy for 65-year-old men had not altered from seven years between 1976 to 1992.

No formal links exist between academic research into ageing and industry. The conference will consider whether strong links are needed between the two areas, whether technology is being effectively exploited in the care of old people, whether there should be a national focus on ageing and where the British position on the world stage should be.

There have been calls for networking in areas such as shared research methodologies, large-scale multi-centre trials and cross-fertilisation of expertise.

The idea of a National Ageing Centre similar to those in the United States, Japan and France will also be discussed. These integrate research with technology and incorporate social studies, considering the age people work until and how to improve the health of the elderly.

It is unlikely a building would be commissioned as a centre, although a facility for discussing strategy might be considered.



'Predatory' firm's tactics kill off rivals

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR

If the Government had wanted to choose the most controversial candidate as the flagship for its privatised rail programme, it could not have done better than going for Stagecoach. It is Britain's largest bus company and at once its most famous and most infamous.

Stagecoach has been built up by the brother-and-sister team of Brian Souter and Ann Glog, both former bus drivers who started the company from redundancy pay-outs, and its profitability is demonstrated by the fact that Mrs Glog recently bought Beaufort Castle, near Inverness, the seat of the late Lord Lovat, a far cry from the coun-

cil house in Perth where she was brought up.

Stagecoach's infancy comes from its aggressive and predatory behaviour towards scores of bus companies which it has either bought up or driven out of business. Stagecoach Holdings now consists of an international empire of 7,300 buses, 20,000 employees, a turnover of £430m and profits in the past six months of nearly £30m. Its shares, now quoted on the Stock Exchange, recently hit an all-time high.

The company, a child of the 1985 Act which deregulated the bus industry, makes no bones about the fact that it feels a local monopoly is the best way to provide services. In a succession of battles it has either taken over

all its competitors or flooded an area with so many buses that others could not compete.

In Darlington last year, for example, it squeezed out local operators by running free services for six weeks, behaviour which the Monopolies and Mergers Commission called "predatory" and "against the public interest". There have been five detailed MMC inquiries over the past year and other battles are looming. Drivers working for Selkent,

one of the two London bus companies Stagecoach took over last year, were recently given 90 days notice of termination of employment in a fight against the unions as the company wants to reduce drivers' wages.

Unlike many other aggressive companies, however, Stagecoach does not fight shy of the media. Yesterday, Brian Cox, executive director and the director in charge of the southern area, spent all morning happily

talking about his company's controversial record.

To gain control of South West Trains, Stagecoach has put in what looks like a very low bid requiring £20m savings on variable costs of £1.25m. Mr Cox said: "We think these cost reductions are realistic and achievable." However, a battle with the unions, particularly the train drivers in Aslef, seems inevitable. Mr Cox says Stagecoach's size is an advantage be-

cause "if a meltdown situation occurs we can survive it".

Nor does Mr Cox disguise the fact that there will be sharp reductions in the 4,000 staff at present employed by the train company. "In the bus industry we have got rid of a lot of managers and management layers. We also expect our staff to work harder than they might have been used to. We will be instilling the same culture in South West Trains."

There may be some relief in the bus industry if Stagecoach is now concentrating on the railways. As a senior London manager who fought off a bid from the company said: "Stagecoach tends to leave the other big players in the bus industry alone but it makes everybody who works for smaller companies apprehensive. They tend to go into companies and shoot the management. They also tend to reduce staff drastically."



Success story: Ann Glog at Stagecoach's garage in Perth. She and her brother now run Britain's largest bus company

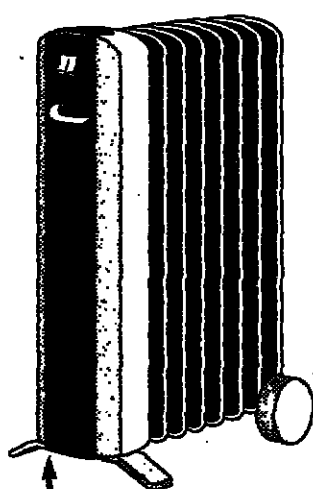
Photograph: Stephen Mansfield

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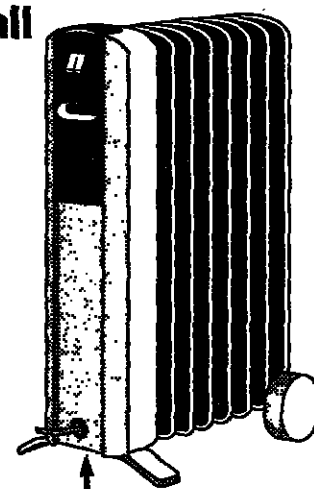
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'Statesman' in new fight for life

Owner pulls out after refinancing plan is vetoed. **Chris Blackhurst** reports

Offers are being invited for the ailing left-wing weekly *New Statesman*, following the decision of Philip Jeffrey, its millionaire owner, to withdraw day-to-day backing.

Grant Thornton, a firm of City accountants, will be appointed administrators to run the socialist magazine, founded by Sidney and Beatrice Webb over 80 years ago. The administrators will seek the best possible price for *New Statesman* which has been losing

money at the rate of £6,000 a week. Mr Jeffrey, a Labour supporter, has refused to continue providing a £125,000 credit facility, used to keep the publication afloat. Faced with his withdrawal, the board has had no choice but to put the magazine's holding company into administration.



In the red: The magazine has been losing £6,000 a week

money at the rate of £6,000 a week.

The decision to pull the plug was taken after an acrimonious

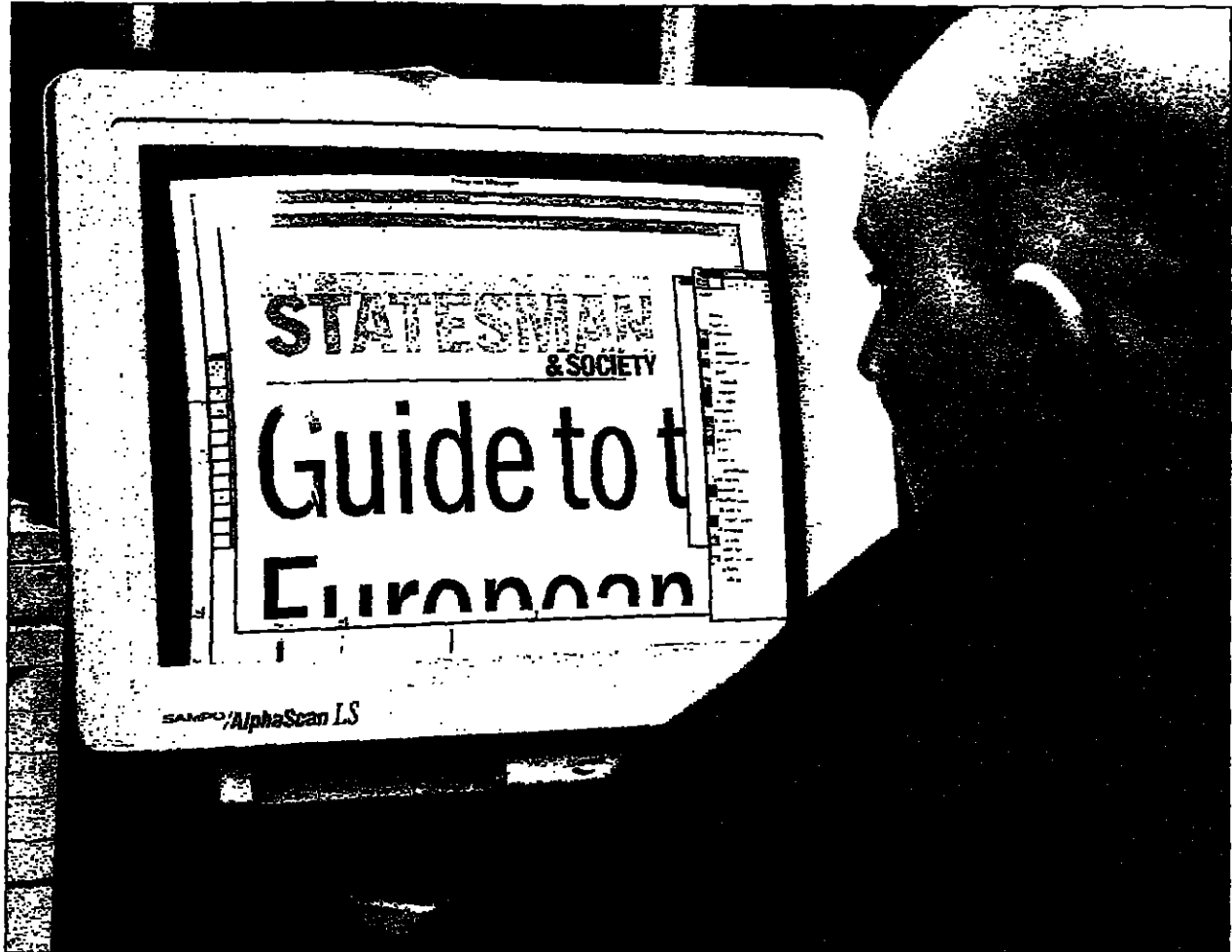
few days which saw Mr Jeffrey's plans to inject new capital into the magazine blocked by its five independent shareholders. Under *New Statesman's* constitution, the five so-called "E" shareholders – who include Margaret Hodge MP, Helena Kennedy QC and Neal Ascherson, the journalist – have the power to veto changes of editor and ownership.

Mr Jeffrey's refinancing plan involved closing down the company which owned the magazine and transferring the title to a new company with a new constitution. This new constitution would scrap independent safeguards, including the five "E" shares – something the independent shareholders were not prepared to countenance.

He secured the approval of other shareholders at a series of meetings last week. However, the independents refused to go along with his plan, claiming it would result in his acquiring total control – something under the constitution they were obliged to prevent.

Mr Jeffrey said yesterday he very much regretted having to take such drastic action but blamed the five for being intransigent and holding power without responsibility. "What has happened is that 94 per cent of the ordinary shareholders voted to support the reconstruction. The independent shareholders voted against, and the company has today moved into administration."

The magazine, he added, "is no longer in my hands. I am sorry it has come to this".



On screen: Paul Anderson, *New Statesman's* deputy editor, working on the forthcoming edition. Photograph: John Voos

An offer of £875,000 of new money from Mr Jeffrey, who made his fortune from the Fads chain of DIY stores, has now lapsed and, he said, may not be renewed. "If other offers come in and they are from consortia

of the left, I would be happy to stand aside." So far, he claimed, his involvement in the magazine had cost him £600,000 with no guarantee he would get it back.

Among those who may come forward are Derek Coombs, the

former Tory MP and millionaire, beaten by Mr Jeffrey for control two years ago, and Philip Whitehead, the ex-Labour MP and television producer, who, along with two other people, holds the right of first refusal

over any change in ownership. The bidders' path will be smoothed by the recent resignation of Steve Platt as editor. Mr Platt, a frequent critic of Tony Blair and editor for the past five years, is expected to stay on until a new owner can be found.

Mr Ascherson, a senior journalist on the *Independent* on Sunday, said Mr Jeffrey had "absolutely refused to have any structure which interfered with his total control". Other publications like the *Economist* and the *Observer*, Mr Ascherson said, had similar structures of independent trustees without any problem.

Ms Hodge said the five would not stand in the way of a refinancing. But they failed to see why it was necessary to remove them completely.

British Psychological Society: Prejudice against single mothers may be misjudged

Sons of feckless fathers 'better off without them'

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

A poor father is worse than an absent father for young boys, according to a study which suggests that the sons of men who are unreliable and inconsistent parents are more likely to develop behavioural problems in later life.

The findings cast doubt on the widespread prejudice against single mothers who have been blamed for the psycho-social problems of their sons as teenagers and young adults.

Catherine Hepworth, of the Department of Psychology at Westminster University, London, told the British Psychological Society conference in London: "The quality of fathering is more important than anything else. If a father is unreliable he is worse than no father at all."

Ms Hepworth analysed the relationship of 99 young men (mean age 20) from north London with their fathers. The majority were white (84 per cent), working-class (83 per cent) and living at home (80 per cent). More than half came from intact families: 19 per cent from families of single mothers; 17 per cent from step-families, and 8 per cent were classed as "other".

The group included sons who had no contact at all with their fathers; others who had poor contact, and the remainder good contact. Ms Hepworth said that poor fathering – in which fathers saw their sons infrequently, were unreliable and regularly forgot birthdays and Christmases, or were repeatedly hostile or abusive – was associated with higher rates of behavioural problems in later life. This included theft, truancy, work absenteeism, damaging or destroying property, and cruelty to people or animals.

The sons who had no contact

with their fathers or who had good contact with them, had similar rates of behavioural problems in later life.

"It seems that a disruptive relationship may be worse than having no relationship with a father," Ms Hepworth said. "The sons tended to blame lots of things on their fathers to do with their insecurity and disappointment. In contrast they tended to have good positive relationships with their mothers."

■ Mature students aged 25 and over who enter university with non-traditional qualifications obtain significantly better degrees than younger students who enter with A levels, the conference was told.

The findings are based on a study which analysed the degree results of almost 7,000 students at Plymouth University between 1991 and 1995. They are the first to show such a clear age-related trend and suggest a "clear superiority" of mature students over those aged 21-25, who in turn outperformed 18- to 20-year-olds.

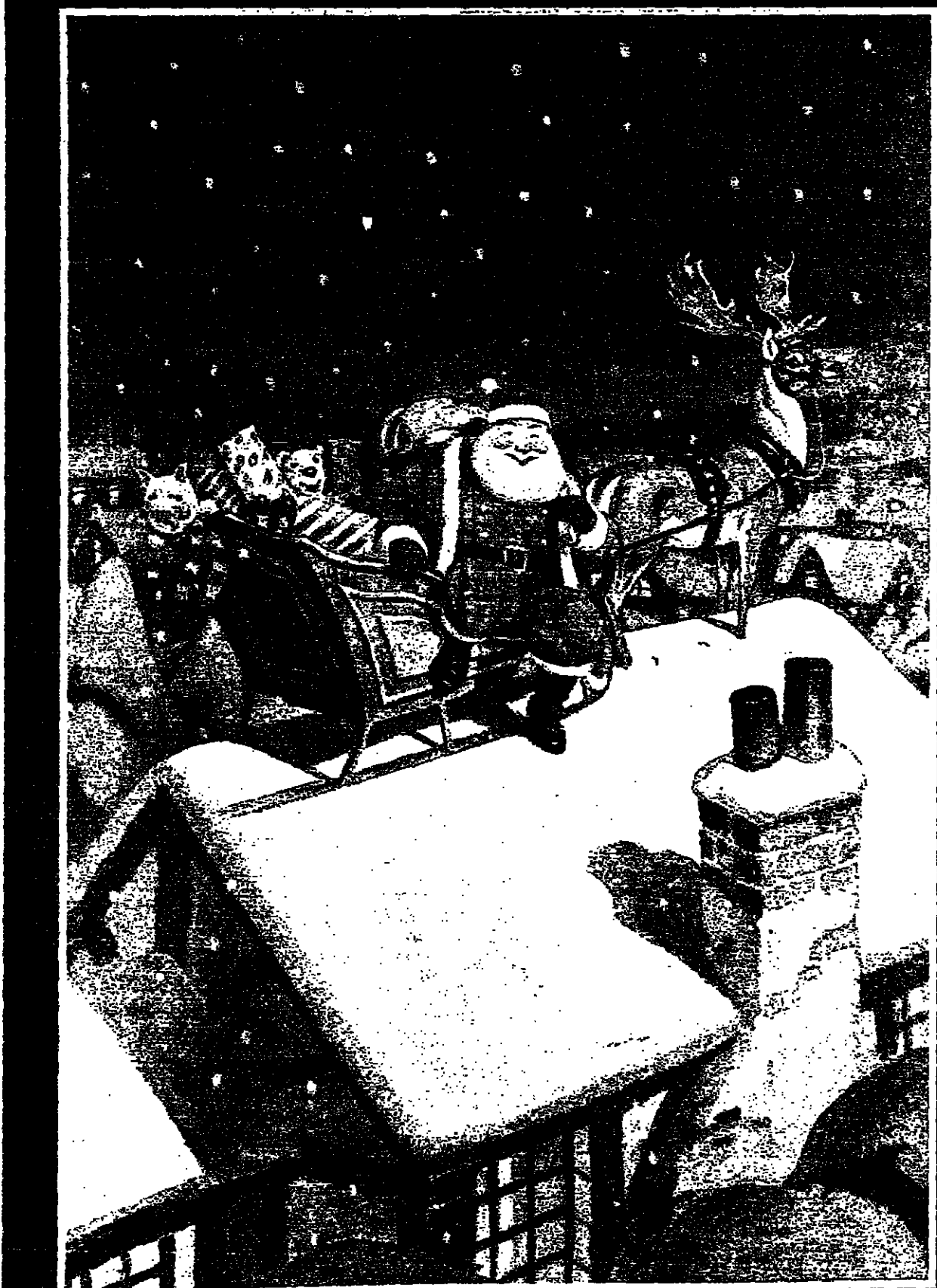
Sherria Hoskins and Professor Stephen Newstead, of the Department of Psychology at Plymouth University, said the results were reassuring. "It reveals the expansion of non-traditional entry into higher education is not producing lower degree performances, but in fact may be raising it," they conclude.

Higher education in Britain is undergoing rapid expansion: in 1985-86 there were fewer than 1 million students in higher education but by 1994-95 the figure was over 1.5 million. More than one-third of new entrants are over 21 and under 60 per cent of new undergraduates have A levels, qualifying instead through qualifications like HND, BTEC or NVQs.

The study also found that women students generally obtained much better degrees than men.



Cast list: (From left) the editor Steve Platt; shareholders Margaret Hodge and Helena Kennedy; and possible buyers Philip Whitehead and Derek Coombs



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Amateur video revives shock of Rabin's death

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jerusalem

The muzzle-flash from the gun in Yigal Amir's hand as he fires point-blank into Yitzhak Rabin's back is clearly visible in a frame from an amateur video published for the first time in an Israeli newspaper yesterday.

The Prime Minister, as he moves towards the open door of his car, has not yet reacted to the impact of the bullet and the heads of his bodyguards have not begun to turn towards the assassin.

The shock of the assassination of Rabin on 4 November was recreated for Israeli television yesterday when the Yediot Aharnot and later Channel 2 television showed the videotape of the killing taken by Ronni Kempler, 37, an accountant at the state comptroller's office. "It is national masochism to watch this," said one Israeli who refused to open a newspaper or turn on the television all day.

The quality of the tape, for which Mr Kempler received \$400,000 (£266,000), is poor during the decisive moments before the murder. At the end of the peace rally which Rabin had addressed, Mr Kempler filmed for eight minutes behind Tel Aviv town hall as he waited for Rabin to emerge. It was late at night and the light was poor. Nevertheless he saw Mr Amir standing, one leg crossed nonchalantly over the other, beside

a tub in which flowers were growing. There are clear shots of Rabin coming down the crowded stairs, with at least two bodyguards. As Rabin walks towards his car a dark shadow moves around behind him and stretches out an arm.

As Mr Amir fires, the cone



Yigal Amir: Trial opened and adjourned yesterday

of light from the muzzle of his gun makes it look like a blowtorch. The dark shadows and indistinct forms make it difficult to distinguish the killer and his victim, but convey an air of menace and drama.

The video provides no new information about the blunders which made it easy for Mr Amir to kill Rabin, though it does prove that at the moment of the assassination he was acting alone. The commission investigating the killing is focusing on the failure by the Shin Bet

security agency to protect Rabin. Shin Bet's head, known as Kaf, and other senior officers have received letters saying they are likely to be blamed for the security failure and advising them to hire lawyers.

The officers warned by the commission are refusing to resign, though four more junior officials have already done so. Shimon Peres, the new Prime Minister, has turned down a resignation offer from Kaf. The government does not want all the blame to be placed on the Shin Bet, in part because it thinks this will allow the right-wing parties to evade responsibility for setting the stage for Rabin's murder.

Mr Amir was in court yesterday for the first day of his trial but after Judge Edmund Levy had read out the charges he adjourned proceedings to 23 January to give time for Mr Amir's lawyers to prepare a defence. Mr Amir has continued to justify the assassination. Wearing a black skullcap and chewing gum, he smiled as he entered the court and, as he sat down, drew his hand across his neck as if somebody was slitting his throat.

His father Shlomo, a religious Jew, prayed continuously and tried unsuccessfully to beg forgiveness from Eitan Haber, a senior aide of Rabin. The government is worried that Mr Amir will use his trial to advocate his views.



Fatal impact: The moment, captured by an amateur video cameraman, when Yigal Amir (right) shot the Israeli Prime Minister point-blank in the back. The picture was published yesterday by the daily Yediot Aharnot

Peking ejects 'biased' foreign reporter

TERESA POOLE
Peking

The Chinese government is expelling a foreign journalist by refusing to renew his annual press credentials, despite protests from three European governments including the German Foreign Minister.

In the latest signal that China's hard-liners are confident enough to ignore international opinion, a resident German journalist has been told to leave China by Thursday next week. Henrik Bork, the Peking bureau chief for the Frankfurter Rundschau since January 1992, was told by officials that his reporting was "aggressive, biased and attacked people and personalities".

The Foreign Ministry spokesman, Chen Jian, yesterday failed to supply any reasons for forcing Mr Bork to leave Peking - and indeed denied that he was being expelled. "I think all of you know that expulsion is entirely different from no extension for visa," he said. Press accreditation is a pre-requisite for renewing a visa.

The allegations appear to date back to articles last year just before the visit by the Prime Minister, Li Peng, to Germany. Mr Bork described how Mr Li ducked questions about his role in the June 1989 Tiananmen massacre and compared him to a "dictator". During his visit, Mr Li was acutely embarrassed by



Henrik Bork: Accused of 'aggressive' reporting

Absent minds keep ancient hatreds alive in Hebron

Hebron - It was the street of forgetfulness. First came the three Palestinians in the clothing store, sewing sleeves on to shirts with old electric machines, promising us that no portrait of Yasser Arafat would ever hang in their store until the Israelis had left. King David Street. An Israeli jeep passed the front door, then three Israeli settlers, Uzi in their hands, stared through the windows at us.

"How can we believe in the peace process when this is going on?" the youngest Palestinian asked, oddly balding for a man in his mid-twenties. "The Jews want us out of this street. They put curfews on us and they come round in the afternoons and at night, especially on Saturdays, to shout abuse. They call us 'dogs' and shout 'Death to Arabs' and throw stones. Now

Jews and Muslims display selective memories of West Bank city's bloody history, writes Robert Fisk

no Arab in Hebron will come and shop here because they don't want trouble, and three shopkeepers on the other side of the street have already closed down and moved elsewhere in town. Don't you see that this is what the Jews want?"

But didn't there used to be a Jewish community in Hebron, asked innocently? Didn't there used to be a Jewish quarter in Hebron until the 1930s? "Never," the two younger men chorused in unison. "These settlers arrived because of the Likud government. They only want to harass us and drive us out."

They looked at me, trying to guess whether I had been taken in by this little act of forgetfulness. The middle-aged man in the corner, working his sewing machine in the shadows,

watched my face and realised I knew his friends were lying. There had, of course, been a long-standing Jewish community in Hebron, living around the building known as the Beit Haddassa. In 1929, Arab rioters massacred 7 Jews not far from this little dilapidated street of 19th-century cut-stone houses. And after 1948, Jordanian troops destroyed what remained of the Jewish quarter.

elsewhere, and: "For every Arab dog will come his time." The name of the illegal right-wing party Kach was everywhere, just as the Palestinian Islamic Hamas movement had begun to scrawl its own name at the other end of the street with an equally unpleasant message: "No Jews here."

We walked down the street past the Beit Haddassa. A few hours earlier, someone had thrown a grenade at the Israeli army checkpoint 200 metres away and six Israeli paratroopers were patrolling in front of us. A teenage Palestinian schoolgirl walked beside us. "This street used to be alive and now it is a skeleton," she said. "How can there be any feeling of peace when these things are allowed to go on? No, I can't

believe in the peace process. If Arafat can't get these settlers out of the centre of our town, how will he get part of Jerusalem?" We left the girl, but the three settlers who had seen us in the shop were standing farther down the street and, as we passed, the shortest one shouted "Al usikhim le'avur" to an Israeli soldier, and pointed at us - "Don't let them pass."

Enthusiasm wanes for action against Nigeria

STEVE CRAWSHAW

A group of Commonwealth foreign ministers meets in London today to decide on further action to force Nigeria into the democratic fold. But it is unclear if the meeting will be able to agree on much more than a few stern words, while the ministers - who met for a working dinner last night - take the opportunity of some last-minute Christmas shopping in London.

Last month, in the immediate wake of the execution of the writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others, indignant Commonwealth leaders promptly suspended Nigeria from membership. However, tempers have cooled. There now seems to be little enthusiasm for putting Nigeria under pressure.

While riot police in Lagos yesterday used tear gas against demonstrators who had gathered for a banned meeting, demanding democracy, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, the Commonwealth secretary-general, spoke of a twin-track approach. On the one hand, he said, Nigeria must be "urged" and "helped" to live up to its democratic commitments under the terms of the Harare declaration of 1993. On the other hand, the foreign ministers would consider ways in which the pressures on the Nigerian military regime could be "sustained and possibly tightened".

Commonwealth countries are deeply divided about what, if anything, to do next. South Africa, which initially took a softly-softly approach on Nige-

ria, is now at the forefront of calls for tougher action, including a possible oil embargo. Britain, another member of the eight-country group, is unwilling to consider an oil embargo or other trade sanctions, arguing that ordinary people will be hurt most. Group members Malaysia and Ghana both abstained at a recent United Nations vote criticising Nigeria.

Some countries fear that the group might be (in the words of one official) "a forerunner of a new Star Chamber" which could take punitive action against any non-democratic member states. Hence the reluctance to move too hard, too fast.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, said yesterday that Nigeria's suspension was a "watershed" for the Common-



Emeka Anyaoku: Backs twin-track approach

wealth. Addressing the Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee, he talked of the "universal standards" that the Commonwealth was seeking to impose. But he argued it does not have a unique role to play. "It can apply pressure, but its position is no different to that of any other international organisation. At the end of the day, change in internal matters will only come about when the government of the country concerned is prepared to respond."

Wreckage reveals 35,000ft death dive of Russian airliner

VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV
Associated Press

Moscow - The airliner that crashed in Russia's Far East earlier this month had gone into a sudden spin at 35,000 feet, leaving the 97 people on board no chance to survive, officials said yesterday.

Rescuers found the wreckage on Monday, 11 days after the Russian plane crashed on 7 December in a remote region north-east of the city of Khabarovsk. They saw a crater and debris of the Tu-154, indicating that the plane hit the ground almost vertically, the Itar-Tass news agency said. Investigators had not yet determined why the pilots lost control of the plane.

More than 50 rescue workers were combing the snowy moun-

tain slope for the remains of victims and gathering fragments. Yesterday they found one of the aircraft's two flight recorders, which could shed light on the cause of the crash.

Experts do not rule out the possibility of an explosion on board, although they believe it unlikely. The more probable cause is failure of ageing equipment, since the Tu-154 had been in service for 19 years.

Officials planned to fly relatives of the victims to the crash site today, but could offer them almost nothing for identification. The blast dug a crater 2 yards deep and 40 yards across. The debris was discovered accidentally by a helicopter that was not part of the rescue force. Authorities said rescue aircraft had flown over the site four times but failed to spot the

wreckage because of difficult terrain and bad weather.

The Tu-154, carrying 89 passengers and eight crew, went off radar screens while flying from Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, on Sakhalin Island, to Khabarovsk, on the mainland.

The jet belonged to Khabarovsk Airlines, a regional subsidiary of Aeroflot.

It crashed in the remote Bof-Jaus mountains about 34 miles west of the Tatar Strait.

The daily Segodnya quoted aviation experts as saying that only test pilots can sometimes get a big jet out of a spin, but ordinary crew members usually panic and fail to react in the minute or two they have before the plane hits the ground. A sudden spin also would explain why the Tu-154's crew failed to contact traffic controllers.

"What can I get for Amy?"

Madonna
"Something To Remember"

A collection of Madonna's best love songs, including classics like "Oh Father", "Rain", "Take A Bow", "This Used To Be My Playground" and "I'll Remember", together with new tracks including her recent hit "You'll See" and "I Want You" (with Massive Attack).

Enya
"The Memory Of Trees"

Enya's brand new album has been four years in the making and the consensus is that it is her best ever. Haunting, enchanting - curandary! (Daily Express). "Like nothing else on Earth" (Q). Includes the hit single "Anywhere Is".

Alanis Morissette
"Jagged Little Pill"

Not only has Alanis lived through some troubled times but she fights back with words that will have you nodding in agreement and sniffling at the wit with which she deals the killer blow. Undoubtedly the hottest new star of 1995, her album contains the hits "You Oughta Know" and "Hand In My Pocket".

Seal
"SEAL"

Seal's second album is a worthy follow up to his classic debut album. Contains the hit "Prayer For The Dyin'". "Kiss From A Rose" (which was featured in Batman Forever and went to Number One in the USA), "Newborn Friend", "I'm Alive" and "Don't Cry". An album for lovers everywhere.

Cher
"It's A Man's World"

One of the most illustrious albums of Cher's lengthy recording career, it includes "Walking In Memphis", "One By One" and classics such as "The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Anymore" and "It's A Man's Man's Man's World". With her unique voice sounding as rich and powerful as ever this new album is a must for Cher fans new and old.

155/100/100

Reformers turn to battle for the Kremlin

PHIL REEVES
Moscow

With the ink barely dry on the millions of ballot papers that have propelled the Communists back into the forefront of Russian politics, reform parties have already turned their minds to perhaps the most critical issue of all - how to avoid a split which could destroy their chances in next year's elections for the presidency.

Supporters of Russia's move to the free market - including the main Western powers - fear that if the pro-reform parties continue to be divided into squabbling factions, no democratic candidate will get into a run-off for the presidency in next June's election, opening the way for a Communist or hard-line nationalist to be elected.

The issue was thrust to the fore yesterday by Grigory Yavlinsky, head of the liberal-leaning Yabloko party, who makes no secret of his desire to occupy the top job. As results in the parliamentary election continued to come in, consolidating the Communists' victory, he called for a broad alliance of reformists "to unite all forces opposed to attempts to restore a totalitarian system", although he made it clear that this should not include Mr Yeltsin.

As he spoke, figures from Sunday's election confirmed that Russia is as polarised as ever between its pro-reform western cities (principally Moscow and St Petersburg) and its anti-reform rural areas, where living standards have plunged since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Communists, who last night were leading with 21.5 per cent, consolidated their hold on the State Duma by winning a stack of seats in single-mandate constituencies. By yesterday evening they had won 49 of the 225 seats, with 30 left to count. This means they are likely to bag a total of between 120-150 seats, giving them about a third

of the 450-seat legislature, short of overall control.

The divisions among their opponents could scarcely be more critical, at least to those who believe Russia should continue its path to democracy and the free market. "History does repeat itself," Mike McFaul, a leading analyst of Russian politics, said. "It is a very scary thing they are playing with."

Mr McFaul, of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Moscow, believes that Mr Yavlinsky, whose party was trailing in fourth place last night, is part of the problem, describing him as a "very dangerous presidential candidate" because he stands little chance of victory but has the capacity to split the pro-reform vote. He predicted Mr Yeltsin would try to "buy him off" with the offer of a deputy prime minister's position.

Mr Yeltsin has said he will announce in February whether he will fight for a second term. His wealthy supporters will probably want him to continue in power, if only to protect them from prosecution over their shady privatisation deals.

He may, however, decide to stand down in favour of an anointed successor - perhaps Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Prime Minister, whose party, Our Home Is Russia, was heading for nearly 10 per cent of the vote.

As the reformers fretted over strategy, the Communist leader, Gennady Zyuganov, was doing his best to dampen down fears in the West that the red flag of repressive Soviet-style Communism is flying high again in Russia. Yesterday, he appealed to foreign leaders to abandon what he called "biro thinking", a reference to the Cold War. "Biro" thinking had already resulted in piling up "uncountable arsenals of weapons", he said. "The planet will not endure another lap of the arms race." Instead, there should be a "mechanism for security and co-operation in Europe". Every word Mr Zyuganov ut-

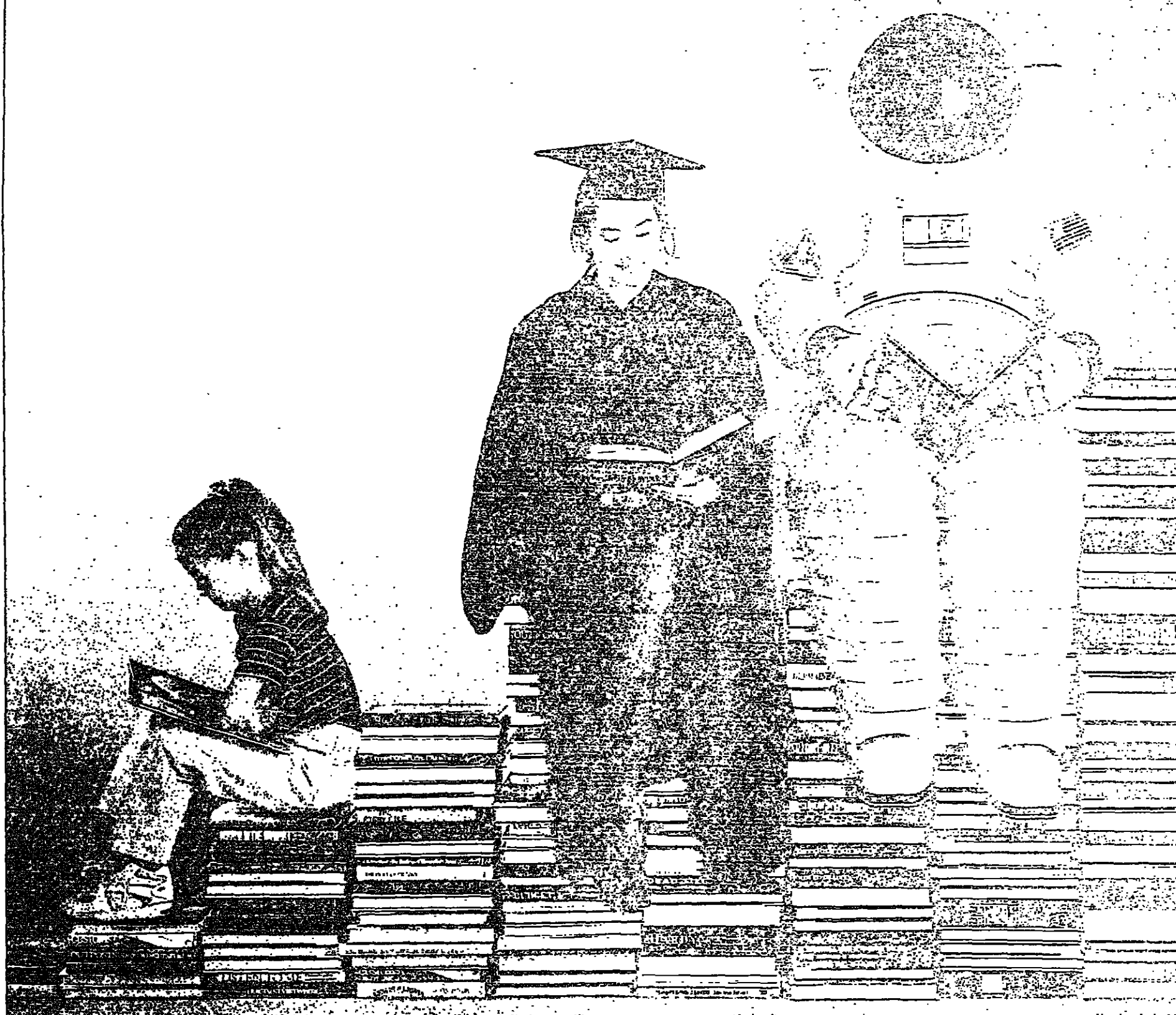
ters is being scrutinised by Western analysts, anxious to know what kind of threat he represents. But the Communist Party has yet to decide on its presidential candidate, and it may not be him. Mr Zyuganov's pro-Western statements have annoyed some hard-line leaders who may dump him in favour of someone with more orthodox credentials.

As matters stand, the Kremlin will not regard the election as an outright defeat, largely because the 40-odd per cent vote for the Communists and nationalists is no larger than it was in 1993. But if the hard left is sophisticated enough to form an alliance, and the reformists continue to bicker, then Russia's fledgling democracy could sink in the stormy seas ahead.



Business as usual: The Austrian Chancellor, Franz Vranitzky (left), whose Social Democratic Party held on to power in Sunday's elections, in talks with President Thomas Klestil in Vienna yesterday

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IN BRIEF

Indian minister denies N-test plans

New Delhi - India did not plan to conduct a nuclear test, said the Foreign Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, who said that reports to this effect were speculative and baseless. The New York Times, quoting US satellite data, reported last week that Delhi might be preparing a test. *Reuters*

Top Bosnia envoy to step down

Washington - Richard Holbrooke, the hard-driving American diplomat who helped to negotiate peace in Bosnia, told Congress that he would leave his post early next year. A former Wall Street financier, he is expected to return to private industry. State Department officials said he would be succeeded by John Kornblum, a career diplomat. *AP*

'Plotting' Cambodian prince faces exile

Phnom Penh - Prince Norodom Sirivudh, a former Cambodian foreign minister, was released into the custody of his half-brother, King Norodom Sihanouk, pending his expected departure into exile. Prince Sirivudh was arrested a month ago on allegedly plotting to kill Hun Sen, one of the country's co-prime ministers. *AP*



Garbo's silk knickers left alone

New York - Monogrammed silk knickers worn by Greta Garbo in a 1935 production, *Love and Learning*, offered by the estate of a former lover, Knicker B. for a limited time at an auction of Hollywood costumes and memorabilia. The top bid of \$6,500 (£4,300) was far below a pre-sale estimate of \$10,000 to \$15,000. *AP*

Captain suspected of immigrant scam

Syracuse - The captain and five crewmen of a Greek cargo ship were detained on suspicion of running illegal immigrants to Italy after the vessel ran aground off Sicily. *Reuters*

Colombo wages war of the pensions

Sri Lanka - In an effort to starve Tamil rebels of funds, the Sri Lankan government will withhold salaries of state employees in all districts affected by terrorism. Thousands of pensioners and government workers will go without their money unless they can cross into government-controlled areas to collect it. *AP*

Nato's new man makes peace pledge

Brussels - Javier Solana, the former Spanish foreign minister, became NATO's new secretary-general and promised to work for peace. He said the alliance's peace mission in Bosnia, where NATO takes over from the UN today. *AP*

China bans date with profitable returns

Peking - China has banned the use of 1997 as a trademark, and registered 1997 trademarks for tobacco and other goods. It also banned the use of these four numbers, as it is the year of the Chinese New Year. An official of the State Intellectual Property Administration said an official of the State Intellectual Property Bureau. *Reuters*

131 feared dead in Angola air crash

Luanda - A four-gun airliner carrying 150 people crashed in Angola. A four-gun airliner carrying 150 people crashed in Angola. A four-gun airliner carrying 150 people crashed in Angola. *Reuters*

international

Crazy monument to a broken, cheated Sioux nation

DAN KOHANE ANALYSIS

Crazy Horse Mountain, South Dakota — What is it about the Black Hills that compels people to carve them into monuments? Maybe it's the quality of the granite, maybe the ravishing vistas that guarantee a perfect frame for the sculptor's handiwork — or maybe it's simply the doctrine that a Big Country should have Big Art, which explains why, for more than half a century now, the heads of George, Thomas, Abe and Teddy have been glowing from Mount Rushmore.

But one day even the four presidents will be but figurines compared to Crazy Horse. Since 1947, an eccentric Polish-American sculptor and his descendants have been busy 30 miles away at what was once known as Thunderhead Mountain. When the project is complete (the year 2050 is the guessimate) the mightiest of all Sioux warriors will burst from the living rock astride a galloping horse, his hair streaming in the wind, crowned by a single feather alone measuring 44 feet in length.

And who cannot be impressed by this endeavour, this "ruin in reverse" epic to the point of lunacy? The Black Hills, I have been told, are visible in a satellite picture of the earth, meaning that one day Crazy Horse will probably become the first human shape discernible to the naked eye of the passing cosmonaut. Already, 8.5 million tons of rock have

been removed but they've barely started on his lips. The complete face will not be ready until June 1998 — and that is ahead of schedule, thanks to a string of mild winters. Still more impressive, when I was there last week, some of the sons and heirs of Korczak Ziolkowski were up on the mountaintop, carving and drilling, despite a temperature of minus 12°C or less.

But something nags. Yes, Ziolkowski, who died in 1982, had only \$174 (£113) in his pocket when he took up the invitation of a Sioux chief to start his venture. Repeatedly he turned down offers of federal help, insisting that if the public wanted to honour so great a hero, individuals and not the government should pay. Yet for all its lousiness, this rendering of the Sioux leader who annihilated General Custer and the Seventh Cavalry at the battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876 is, at best, a gigantic consolation prize; at worst, a condescending act of atonement on the part of a white race that will never give back to the Indian what really matters — his land.

When it is finished Ziolkowski's Crazy Horse tableau will be 563ft tall and 641ft long, the head alone as large as those of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Roosevelt on Mount Rushmore combined. But many in the seven tribes and 70,000 people of the Great Sioux Nation would exchange a hundred monuments for return of just



Stoney faced: Work on Crazy Horse in Dakota. The finished statue (modelled right) — circa 2050 — will be 563ft tall and 641ft long. After 48 years, 8.5 million tons of rock have been removed

part of their sacred Black Hills.

Tim Giago, born on the Sioux reservation of Pine Ridge and now publisher of *Indian Country Today*, the largest Indian newspaper in the US, recounted

to me the wretched tale. For the Sioux the Black Hills, ceded in 1868 by the US government in 1868 only to be seized back when gold was discovered there six years later, are the land from

which their ancestors sprang. "The statue of Crazy Horse is a desecration, just like Mount Rushmore was a defilement. And who is it honouring: a great chief or the Ziolkowskis?"

In 1912, the Sioux began litigation to regain their lands. Finally, in 1980, the Supreme Court ruled they had been wronged, and Washington offered \$105m in compensation.



The Sioux refused. Today the \$105m is worth with interest \$350m, but still they refuse. "We lost 7 million acres," Mr Giago says. "All we are asking for back is 1.3 million acres."

Instead the Sioux stand to lose still more. If Congress has its way, funding for the Bureau of Indian Affairs — the biggest employer of American Indians — will be reduced by 10 per cent, or \$168m next year, part of the Republican effort to balance the budget. Let them eat blackjack, poker and slots, runs the unspoken reasoning, fuelled by reports that some Indian tribes are making a fortune out of reservation gambling. If so, why is Shannon County in South Dakota, where Pine Ridge is to be found and where a makeshift casino rears from the endless prairie, still the poorest county in the entire USA?

I returned from Crazy Horse Mountain to Rapid City, jumping-off point of a visit to the

Black Hills. Wandering down a dark Main Street, I stopped at a shop displaying panoramic photographs of the Black Hills, as well as one taken in 1948 of gaunt Sioux elders, said to have been at the Little Big Horn battle. Just then a man shambled over to me, wrapped against the biting cold. He was at least 50, his black ponytail streaked with grey, unmistakably Indian. He struck up a conversation, before pointing to one of the leaders: "My grandfather, Little Eagle." Well — who knows. But there was no ambiguity about his next remark: "Gotta a dollar, just to buy a drink?" Such has been the descent of the American Indian: from Crazy Horse and the freedom of the plains, to dingy reservations and drunks on the sidewalks of Rapid City. These are facts not even the biggest statue can change.

Rupert Cornwell

Win £10,000 of Hi-Fi, VCRs and more with the INDEPENDENT

We would like to give you some sound advice — enter our Aiwa prize draw and you could end up with the hi-fi system of your dreams. We have £10,000 of Aiwa technology to be won, including powerful mid-fi systems, VCRs and personal CD players, all of which are stylish and packed with features. There are five prize packages plus 22 runners-up prizes. They comprise:

- First prize**
Z-D9300M Mid-Fi Hi-Fi System
LCX-500 Micro Hi-Fi System
HV-FX77 VCR
- Second prize**
XP-R600 Personal CD Player
- Third prize**
NSX-999 Mini Hi-Fi System
HS-RX348 Personal Stereo Tape Model
HV-FX77 VCR
- Fourth prize**
LCX-500 Micro Hi-Fi System
HV-FX77 VCR
- Fifth prize**
LCX-500 Micro Hi-Fi System
XP-R600 Personal CD Player
- Runners-up**
LCX-500 Micro Hi-Fi System

These great Aiwa prizes take home entertainment to new heights of enjoyment. Here is a brief description of each component prize.

The Z-D9300M Mid-Fi Hi-Fi System incorporates a Dolby Pro Logic speaker system and 5-CD auto changer. It has five speakers with ample power output, 3-band

tuner, graphic equaliser, double auto-reverse cassette deck, and belt-drive automatic turntable.

The compact size of the LCX-500 Micro Hi-Fi System belies the quality of its sound. This versatile system comprises 10W+10W amplifier, 3-band tuner, top-loading CD player, cassette deck and speakers.

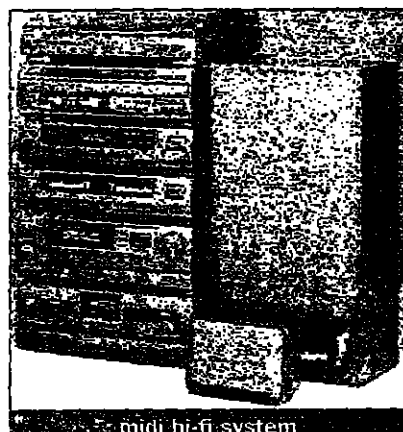
The HV-FX77 VCR is packed with features that make recording and playing so simple that even adults can do it. It has four heads for increased picture clarity, VideoPlus for ease of programming, and a one-month, six-event timer programme.

For music on the move, the lightweight XP-R600 Personal CD Player offers great CD sound plus a digital synthesiser tuner with 30 pre-set bands.

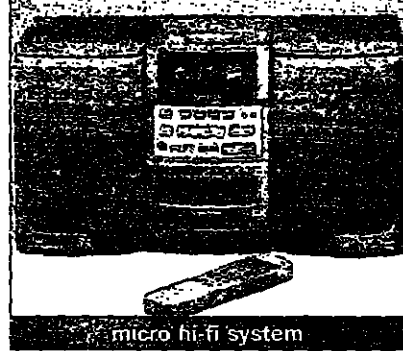
The NSX-999 Mini Hi-Fi System is built around a powerful 150W+150W amplifier linked to a tuner, 3-CD auto changer CD player, and a double auto-reverse cassette deck. The speaker system features 3-way bass reflex.

The HS-RX348 Personal Stereo Tape Model offers full remote control with a digital tuner and one-key joystick operation.

How To Enter: To be in with a chance of winning one of the prize packages listed left, you must collect four differently numbered tokens from the seven that we are printing. Today we are printing token four and the entry form. Fill in the entry form and send it, along with your four differently numbered tokens, to the address shown. Rules are as previously published. The entry form will be reprinted on Saturday.



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Send your completed entry form, along with 4 differently numbered tokens, to: Independent, Aiwa Prize Draw, P.O. Box 250, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL7 1TU. Closing date: 16 January 1996.

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Hopes raised of end to US budget deadlock

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

After three days of stalemate, rancour and another partial government shutdown, President Bill Clinton and Republican leaders in Congress arranged a meeting last night which offered hope of some movement in their interminable wrangle over the budget.

Before the talks, both sides were playing down speculation of an important breakthrough on the issue at the heart of the dispute: a strategy to reach a balanced federal budget within seven years. But the session might at least produce a formula for a return to work by the 260,000 government workers sent home this week after the last temporary spending bill expired on Friday.

According to Mr Clinton's spokesman, Mike Curry, the discussions with Bob Dole, the Senate Republican leader, and Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker, would be "without precondition," an oblique way of saying that on the two main bones of contention — cuts in the Medicare and Medicaid health

care schemes and the \$345bn (£160bn) tax cut sought by Republicans — the White House and Congress remain as far apart as ever. Indeed, they still cannot even agree on the economic forecasts to use as a basis for negotiation.

With the impasse threatening to drag on into the New Year, the best chance of breaking the deadlock probably lies in a big shake-out in the financial markets, driving stocks down and interest rates sharply higher as investors realise that the assumption of a budget deal that had underpinned the recent run-up on Wall Street might be wrong.

But Monday's 100-point fall in the Dow made little outward impression on Mr Clinton yesterday. Signing his veto to another of the 13 appropriations bills for the 1996 budget sent him by Congress, the President declared that there "will always be such changes in a vibrant market economy". A clearer gauge was due later yesterday, as the Federal Reserve met to consider a cut in short-term interest rates.

In another sign of business

unease, the heads of 90 big corporations look out a two-page advertisement in the main newspapers to issue a "bipartisan appeal" to Republicans and Democrats.

But although the outline of a bargain has long been obvious,



Senator Dole: meeting with President Clinton last night

in the shape of bigger spending cuts than offered by Mr Clinton, and Republican acceptance of a far smaller tax reduction, huge obstacles remain. A phalanx of younger conservative House Republicans are opposed to any compromise while, with the 1996 election less than a year off, the President must look to his own base.

Indeed, the suspicion is widespread that the White House wants no settlement other than entirely on its terms, in the calculation that the defence of Medicare and Medicaid from "heartless" Republicans would make an ideal platform on which to fight the election.

Yesterday, Mr Clinton received a further boost with the backing, albeit grudging, of a group of Democratic moderates who had been toying with sponsoring an independent challenge for the White House next year. That idea seems to have evaporated. The only factor which changes their loyalty, they hinted after a strategy meeting in Minneapolis, was if Mr Dole, the likely Republican nominee, took Colin Powell as his running mate. Mr Dole suggested as much at the weekend, but the former general yesterday reiterated he was not interested in the vice-presidency.

Markets, page 16

French unions left in disarray

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

With the return to work now in full swing across France, members of France's oldest union, the CGT, led off another big street protest through central Paris last night in a final — and largely token — attempt to have the government's welfare reform plan withdrawn. The abolition of the plan, formulated by the Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, is the single demand of the trade unions that has not been granted after more than three weeks of strikes and protests.

But even as the CGT train drivers, who formed the backbone of the past month's strikes, lined up noisily in the Place de la République, the power of the

unions overall seemed little enhanced. Although they can claim to have supported almost every reform proposed by Mr Juppé, except for the basic structural change in how the health and welfare system is administered, they have emerged no more united than when the dispute began.

Yesterday's march, for instance, was sponsored only by the overtly left-wing CGT, not by the Force Ouvrière which had jointly supported all the previous protests. Moreover, the bombastic leader of the FO, Marc Blondel, was suddenly quiet, working on his union's preparations for tomorrow's "social summit" with Mr Juppé and government ministers.

Mr Blondel's leadership of

the protests — at least in media terms — also seems to have brought him no benefit. Yesterday, the head of the FO organisation in the Paris region, Jacques Mairé, announced that he would challenge Mr Blondel at the union's national congress in February.

In giving reasons for his decision, Mr Mairé showed how difficult it is for trade unions to collaborate effectively in France for any length of time. He said that the FO risked having its "independence compromised by the place occupied by a political sect, the [extreme-left] Workers' Party", and he objected to the fact that Mr Blondel had made common cause with the FO's old enemy, the CGT.

The leader of the third, and

biggest, union — the CFDT — Nicole Notat, is in trouble with her executive for having initially suggested that the Juppé plan might have positive aspects. She has periodically called for an end to the stoppages and a start to talks.

The discord in the unions, even after a highly effective protest, is evidence of how little the unions had initially sought to fight the government and how far the dispute was genuinely thrust upon them by the strength of grassroots opinion in the public sector.

Nor has the return to work been as swift or wholehearted as many had expected. The national rail network was still working only about 50 per cent yesterday.

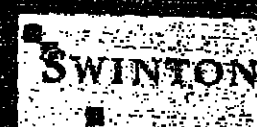
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Lights go back on as Nato takes command

SUSAN LINNIE
Associated Press

Sarajevo — More Nato troops and equipment poured into Bosnia yesterday as alliance commanders prepared to take over formal command of peace enforcement from the UN peace-keeping mission.

Six US cargo planes bringing troops and food supplies arrived at Tuzla, in northern Bosnia, where 20,000 American troops will be headquartered. Another aircraft brought an advance party of the 1,500 Russian peace-keepers, to be based in the American sector.

In Sarajevo, citizens rejoiced as warm light flooded the city, after the German ambassador, Johannes Presinger, threw the switch on a new power line mostly financed by Germany.

"We've come to help them to implement their agreement," Gen Walker said. "We offer the chance of something that everybody wants — peace."

UN forces in Bosnia, numbering 24,000 at their peak, were at best able to help deliver humanitarian aid. At worst, they were harassed, shot at, taken hostage and accused of failing to protect Bosnian civilians from the tortures of almost four years of war that have left 200,000 dead or missing and more than 2 million homeless.

"I do not under-estimate the challenge, but I-for has been given the tools to do the job," Gen Walker said. He added Nato would be working "with Bosnian people, evenhandedly to help create the environment in which the reconstruction of this country can take place."

Admiral Leighton Smith, the American commander of the Nato mission, will join Gen Walker at today's handover ceremony. Many of the UN troops from Nato countries will remain in Bosnia, swapping their blue berets for camouflage.

More US army engineers arrived in Croatia to prepare construction of a pontoon bridge across the Sava River to Bosnia. Once that is established, troops and equipment can move overland to Tuzla.

Despite heavy snow, a train with 67 engineers arrived in Zupanja, on the Croatian-Bosnian border. It also carried 40 vehicles and equipment. Four other trains were moving toward Zupanja and nearby Slavonki Brod, a Nato spokesman said in Zagreb.

Trying to make up for weather-related delays, a US Air Force advance team landed at Ferihegy airport in Budapest yesterday to establish landing facilities in the Hungarian capital. Fog has slowed landings of men and equipment at Tuzla, in southern Hungary, where the US military is setting up a supply base for Bosnia-bound American troops.

Belgrade — General Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb army commander and a suspected war criminal, ranks high in favour in Serbia, according to a poll published yesterday, AP reports.

Gen Mladic, twice indicted for genocide by the UN tribunal dealing with war crimes in former Yugoslavia, trails only behind Serbia's President, Slobodan Milosevic, according to the popularity poll, conducted by the Belgrade-based Institute of Social Sciences.



Gently does it: Bosnian army soldier removing a mine in an exercise north of Tuzla

Photograph: Corinne Dufka/Reuters

CHILDREN OF WAR APPEAL

As Christmas approaches, the Independent is asking readers to support four charities working to help child victims of the wars in former Yugoslavia. Please make your cheques or postal orders payable to the charity of your choice and send it with the coupon below.

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General Walker: "We have the tools for the job"

The German Foreign Minister, Klaus Kinkel, was supposed to inaugurate the new source of electricity, which was scarce throughout the war, but was unable to land on account of fog and snow at the airport. Sarajevans already refer to the electricity as "Kinkelpower".

This is great — look at those lights, white, yellow, white, yellow," said Jasna Miletovic, 41, as she drove her car past Bosnian Serb positions less than 100 yards away. "This now looks like real peace."

Nato formally takes over peace-keeping duties from the UN at a ceremony in Sarajevo today. Major-General Sir Michael Walker, commander of Nato's Rapid Reaction Corps, which is helping to co-ordinate the transfer of command, landed in Sarajevo yesterday.

Unlike the lightly-armed UN peace-keepers who faced often insurmountable odds as war raged around it, the 60,000 Nato-led force (I-For) has a peace plan signed by all the warring sides behind it.

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obituaries / gazette

Sir Denis Dobson

Denis Dobson was a civil servant of memorable personality. He was outstandingly energetic and able, and his attention was strongly focused on the work of the Lord Chancellor's Office, in which he served for 30 years. For him it was both his vocation and his hobby. He became a legend in Whitehall for his commitment to his job and for the vigour with which he expressed his views, particularly when dealing with anyone who disagreed with him.

Originally from the North, he went to Charterhouse and to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he gained a First in Part I of the Law Tripos and in the LLB examination. He started his career in Newcastle upon Tyne, where he was articled to a firm of local solicitors, and in 1933 was admitted a solicitor. He then moved to London to join a firm there, but it was not a success. In consequence he very soon left them and joined a firm of parliamentary agents, where he laid the foundation of his skills as a draftsman, which was the area of the law in which he most excelled and where he was most at home.

Dobson's career was interrupted by the Second World War, in which he served in the Royal Air Force, first in the Western Desert as Administrative Plans Officer with the Desert Air Force, working with the Eighth Army, including service through El Alamein, and later in Malta and in Italy. His drive and energy were already recognisable, and by the end of his service there he had become Senior Personnel Staff Officer to the Desert Air Force. His ambition was to join the legal branch of the Foreign Service at the end of the war, but tuberculosis ruled this out and he went instead into the Statutory Publications Office.

This was a small Whitehall office which had responsibility for the publication of statutes and statutory instruments and, although the canvas on which Dobson then worked was rela-



Dobson: 'Now look here'

tively narrow, the experience he gained there was to prove useful to him in his later career.

The Lord Chancellor's Office was then very small, and contained only a few lawyers. Sir Albert Napier, the then Permanent Secretary, was anxious to strengthen it, and Dobson was introduced to him by Sir Thomas Barnes, the Treasury Solicitor, under whom the Statutory Publications Office came. Dobson joined the Lord Chancellor's Office in April 1947 and attracted immediate attention because of his energy, his keen interest in law reform and legislation, and his command of detail.

Napier realised that Dobson would inevitably be a strong contender for the post of Permanent Secretary. At that time only barristers were qualified for appointment, and he therefore advised Dobson to have himself struck off the roll of solicitors and be called to the Bar. This he did, being called by Middle Temple in 1951. On Napier's retirement in 1954, George Goldstream was appointed Permanent Secretary and Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, and Dobson became his deputy in both offices.

Dobson's skills in the field of legislation proved of the greatest value. Drawing on his earlier experience, Dobson made himself master of every detail of Bills with which the Lord

Chancellor was concerned. But he went beyond that, and regularly briefed his minister on points in Bills for which other ministers were responsible, where Dobson considered it would be desirable for the Lord Chancellor to intervene, to correct some defect or infelicity. Because the legislation was frequently important, but was having to be dealt with under pressure of time, salvos were constantly being exchanged between Dobson, parliamentary counsel, and departmental lawyers. His opening form of address to his opponent, "Now look here, X", became legendary across Whitehall.

In 1968 Goldstream retired and Dobson, at the age of 60, was appointed to succeed him as Permanent Secretary and Clerk of the Crown.

One challenge which Dobson, as head of the office, had to face was posed by the Royal Commission of Assizes and Quarter Sessions which reported in 1969. It sat under the chairmanship of Lord Beeching, who brought to its work the same thorough, explicitly quantitative, approach as he had done to his reorganisation of the railways. The Commission recommended a massive change in the arrangements for the administration of justice, replacing the centuries-old system of assize and quarter sessions courts by a single Crown Court with jurisdiction to sit wherever it was needed.

Of greater concern to Dobson was the Commission's recommendation that a unified court service should be set up under the Lord Chancellor, to run the new system, replacing the old, largely part-time staff, most of whom had been provided by the local authorities. This would involve a huge change in the character of the Lord Chancellor's Office, turning it from a small office, largely concerned with advising the Lord Chancellor, to a major department.

Although a radical in his

youth, Dobson had become increasingly conservative in outlook as he grew older, and he had considerable reservations about the Royal Commission's report. The lawyers working on it in the office had to be ready, at a moment's notice, to justify every detail in it. Though this on occasion could be wearing, Dobson then generously shouldered the responsibility for defending the Bill against criticisms by outsiders.

No one who worked with Dobson will forget him. His forceful vigour and the velocity of his intelligence, his absorption in detail and his command of the law made him memorable. On the debit side (and he knew this himself), his quick temper made him difficult to work with. He was in fact mis-cast. His conservative temperament made him mistrustful of change, so that policy issues were less attractive to him than the law itself. He had all the qualities needed to make a first-class parliamentary draftsman, including a very quick mind, a most elegant style of writing, a mastery of legislative and governmental procedure, and a terrier-like attention to detail.

The decision to appoint him to the Lord Chancellor's Office was entirely understandable, but it was not in fact the best outlet for his very considerable talents.

Derek Outton

Denis William Dobson, lawyer and civil servant; OBE 1947; Deputy Clerk of the Crown in Chancery and Assistant Permanent Secretary to the Lord Chancellor 1954-68; CB 1959, KCB 1969; Clerk of the Crown in Chancery and Permanent Secretary to the Lord Chancellor 1968-77; QC 1971; member, Advisory Council on Public Records 1977-83; married 1934 Thelma Swinburne (marriage dissolved 1947; one son, one daughter); 1948 Elizabeth Allen (two sons, one daughter); died 15 December 1995.



Launch of a 'Liberty ship' in the early days of the Second World War; Tipper's work on determining brittleness in steel (the 'Tipper Test') resolved structural problems which had caused the loss of these hurriedly built merchant ships in the Atlantic. Photograph: Hulton Deutsch

Constance Tipper

"Her vigour in prosecuting her work in an extremely male preserve will always be remembered and admired by those who came into contact with her."

Thus the late Lord Baker about Constance Tipper, the distinguished yet unpretentious woman who made an important contribution to Britain's survival in the Second World War. She was the first to discern the reasons why Liberty ships tended to break in two.

It was in 1943 that Tipper began her important work on the cause of brittle fracture in Liberty ships, after the appointment of J.F. Baker (later Lord Baker) as Professor of Engineering at Cambridge. The Liberty ships were the merchant ships, constructed with great haste at the beginning of the war, which brought vital supplies across the Atlantic to Britain. A number of these ships, complete with their cargoes, had been lost in heavy seas, breaking up like glass, a crack running instantaneously right round the ship. Tipper revealed that the fault in the ships lay not in the method of fabrication and use of welding, as had been suspected, but in the material used, which became dangerously brittle under certain conditions. Her name is now known to engineers of all ages as the creator of the "Tipper

Test" for determining brittleness in steel.

Constance Elam, the daughter of a surgeon, started her education at St Felix, Southwold, and went to Newnham College, Cambridge, in 1912. She graduated in 1915 with a Third in Part I of the Natural Sciences Tripos, but this did not prevent her from achieving a DSc in London in 1926, and a ScD in Cambridge in 1949.

In 1915 she went to the Metallurgical Department of the National Physical Laboratory in Teddington, but quickly moved in 1916 to the Royal School of Mines in Kensington, west London. She was appointed Research Assistant to Sir Harold Carpenter at the Royal School of Mines in 1917, and awarded two successive Fellowships—the Frecheville (1921-23), and the Armourers and Braziers' (1924-29). Having evolved a method of preparing metal crystals she worked at this time with G.I. Taylor of Cambridge, accumulating data on the deformation of these crystals under strain. The Royal School of Mines arranged with Lord Rutherford at the Cavendish Laboratory that while continuing to be employed by the school she should work in Cambridge. In 1928 she married George Tipper, a graduate of Clare College, Cambridge, and

the Superintendent of the Geological Survey in India. When she left the Royal School in 1929 she settled in Cambridge and continued her work there for over 30 years.

Her old college, Newnham, made her a Research Fellow for the year 1930-31. The university, in the Cambridge fashion of those days, gave her testing facilities in the Engineering Department and in 1933 a room in that department, but she had no official status even though the Leverhulme Trust awarded her a Research Fellowship for two years in 1936. She felt her position keenly, but she was still prepared in 1939, on the withdrawal of several lecturers to wartime jobs, to undertake a considerable amount of teaching for the department. She also took charge of the Heat Treatment laboratory where important work was carried out in connection with war contracts.

Newnham elected her an Associate Fellow for three years; and in 1949 Cambridge University made her a Reader. From this time until her retirement in 1960 she was a full member of the Faculty of Engineering and the only woman at the time to hold office in that traditionally male department. She took a full share in teaching both undergraduates and graduates, and continued her

research work in what little time was left after her teaching commitments had been met.

Her published work includes a book for the Oxford University Press, *Deformation of Metal Crystals* (1935), and *The Brittle Fracture Story* (1962), with the Cambridge University Press.

After officially retiring in 1960 Constance Tipper continued until well into her seventies with consultancy work at the Barrow shipyards, and in overseeing progress and improvements in metal bridge construction and other metal structures. She bought Bank House, Langworthy, in Cumbria, in 1955, principally to enjoy the family hobby of fly-fishing. She also enjoyed gardening, water-colour painting and playing the piano.

Constance Tipper celebrated her 100th birthday in 1994, and to mark the occasion Newnham College planted a variegated sweet chestnut in the gardens, now known as the Tipper Tree.

Phyllis Hetzel

Constance Flagg Elam, metallurgist; born Newnham, Hertfordshire 6 February 1894; Reader in Mechanical Engineering, Cambridge University 1949-60; married 1928 George Tipper (died 1947); died Fenrit, Cumbria 14 December 1995.

Canon Professor H. E. W. Turner

The death of Hugh Turner – his baptismal names were Henry Ernest William, but to friends and colleagues he was always Hugh – removes an original and unforgettable personality, more characteristic, perhaps, of an earlier Anglican clerical tradition than that of today.

Deeply learned – he had that almost conventional triple Oxford First of his generation in Classical Moderations, *Litterae Humaniores* and Theology; quietly patriotic – he had been an RAF chaplain in the Middle East during the Second World War and notably wore his campaign medals on Remembrance Sunday; he was also a devoted pastor; his generations of Durham University theological students discovered.

Turner's own theology was of the Evangelical tradition, complemented and matured by a love of the Fathers of the Church, with a devotion to St Athanasius and a particular interest in the Christological controversies of the 5th century. His personal beliefs were strictly orthodox, and his Bampton Lectures, *The Pattern of Christian Truth*, delivered in 1954, represented a defence of the classic Christian understanding of the descent of doctrine from the teaching of Christ and the tradition of the Apostles against the view of Walter Bauer that

there was originally no clear-cut distinction between orthodoxy and heresy. This conviction of the faith once delivered to the saints remained with him, causing him on one occasion to offer to redraft the Thirty-Nine Articles in modern idiom, to express their content while retaining their theology for the benefit of those who could not understand 16th-century English.

Small in stature, like Napoleon, Turner possessed something of Napoleon's prodigious energy, which could be inspiring to others lacking his stamina. He collected stamps, but generally expressed himself by an appetite for work which was not always shared. Besides being head of the Durham University Department of Theology, he was for many years sub-dean of Durham Cathedral. On one occasion he called on his colleague, the Chapter Clerk, late in the evening, with papers relating to cathedral matters, only to be repelled in the best naval tradition by the Clerk, a retired admiral, who remarked that he had an office for such business and would discuss it in the morning. University colleagues were likewise often disconcerted by their chairman's readiness to write minutes or to convene sub-committees.

Hugh Turner was not, how-

ever, simply a machine for the production of theological studies or administrative documents. He had a deeply devotional nature, nourished by the Prayer Book and the Authorized Version of the Bible. In his lectures he maintained the ancient university practice of beginning with prayer, since for him theological study was itself an act of worship. For similar reasons he liked to celebrate Holy Communion on the feast day of his hero, St Athanasius of Alexandria (2 May). In his retirement he assisted at his parish church in Cumbria, and it gave him pleasure that the worshippers could not detect any liturgical difference between his conduct of the services and that of the vicar, a product



Turner: 'Grandpa Smokey'

of the Anglo-Catholic College of St Chad, Durham.

Despite his dedication to work and scholarship, Turner was not indifferent to good food or to a glass of wine or beer. His pipe-smoking was a legend among his colleagues – his grandchildren referred to him as "Grandpa Smokey" – though some observers had the impression that he smoked as many matches as he did tobacco. He was devoted to his wife, Constance, and to his family, and would go to immense trouble to help an individual who felt called to the ordained ministry. He was not the easiest of men to work with, but no one could doubt the sincerity of his deeply held Christian convictions.

Gerald Bonner

Henry Ernest William Turner, priest and theologian; born 14 January 1907; ordained deacon 1931, priest 1932; Fellow, Chaplain and Tutor, Lincoln College, Oxford 1935-50; Canon Residentiary, Durham Cathedral 1950-73; Treasurer 1956-73, Sub-Dean 1959-73; Acting Dean 1973; Lightfoot Professor of Divinity, Durham University 1950-58; Van Mildert Professor of Divinity 1958-73 (Emeritus); DD 1955; married 1936 Constance Parker (two sons); died 14 December 1995.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

HERIQUOT: To Lynne and Anthony, on 8 December, a son, Dominic James, a brother for Sarah.

KAWALEK: On 15 December 1995, to Ronald (née Pring) and Andrew, a son, Tristan John, a brother for Joshua and George.

MOSS-LAWTON: On 10 December in Warwick, to Julia and Mark, a daughter, Gabriella Lucy, a sister for Francesca.

DEATHS

BROCKLESS: On 18 December 1995, Brian, musician, dearly loved husband of Jenny, father of Adrian and Julian. Funeral service at St Bartholomew's, the Great, London, on Friday 22 December, 10.30am. All enquires to Robert Ayling, Funeral Services, telephone 01483 293333.

TREHOWN: Professor Sir William Henry, CBE, of Edgbaston (Birmingham), died peacefully at his home on Friday 15 December 1995. Private cremation to be held on Friday 22 December 1995.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Funeral services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3DL, telephone 0171-233 2011 (24-hour answering machine 0171-233 2012) or faxed to 0171-233 2016, and are charged at £4.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr P. C. Woodland and Miss M.-N. Kendall

The engagement is announced between Marie-Noëlle, daughter of Philip and Aileen Kendall, of Marlow, Buckinghamshire, and Philip, son of Charles and Mavis Woodland, of Worthing, West Sussex.

Birthdays

Miss Jenny Agutter, actress, 43; Mr Michael Beaumont, Seigneur of Sark, 68; Lord Braham of Tara, former government minister, 49; Mr Billy Baage, rock singer and songwriter, 57; Mr Simon Channing, chairman, London Philharmonic, 55; Sir George Goldstream QC, former Permanent Secretary to the Lord Chancellor, 88; Mr Malcolm Cooper, marksman, 48; Mr Peter Criss, drummer, 53; Mr Charles Denton, Head of Drama, BBC Television, 58; Miss Bo Derek, actress, 38; Mr Bo Diddley, singer and guitarist, 67; Lord Howe of Aberavon QC, former cabinet minister, 69; Miss Lesley Judth, actress, 49; Mr James Leasor, actor, 72; Sir Gavin Lightman, High Court judge, 66; Mr Donald Tandy, actor, 72; Miss Rachel Trickett, former Principal, St Hugh's College, Oxford, 72; Mr John Whitely, chairman, the Really Useful Group, 65; Mr John Wilkins, Editor, the *Tablet*, 59.

Anniversaries

Births: Nicholas Sanson, cartographer, 1599; Pieter de Hooch, painter, 1629; John Wilson Croker, politician and reviewer, 1789; William Burn, architect, 1789; Nicolas-Toussaint Charlet, designer and military

painter, 1792; Thomas Graham, chemist, 1805; The Rev Edwin Abbott, headmaster and theologian, 1838; Teresa Schwartz, portrait painter, 1852; Harvey Sarnad Finstone, industrialist, 1868; Lorenzo Perosi, priest and composer, 1872; Theodore Francis Pows, novelist, 1875; Sir Robert Gordon Menzies statesman, 1884; Li-Sen Sir Frederick Arthur Brown-Brown, 1896; Robert Jemison Van de Graaff, physicist and inventor, 1901.

Deaths: Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, AD 107; Ambrose Pare, surgeon, 1590; Thomas Hill, literary patron, prototype of "Paul Pry", 1840; Henry Harland, novelist and editor, 1905; Emile-François Loubet, statesman, 1929; James Hilton, novelist, 1954; Moss Hart, playwright, 1961; John Ernst Steinbeck, novelist, 1968; Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, Spanish prime minister, assassinated 1973; Bobby Darin (Robert Walden Cassano), singer, 1973; Arthur Robinowitz, pianist, 1982; Gwen Berrynan, actress ("Doris Archer"), 1983; Bill Brandt, photographer, 1983. On this day the first General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was held, 1560; Peter the Great's reformation of the Russian calendar was announced, 1699; the last issue of the original *Specialist* was published, 1711; the State of Texas was incorporated in the United States, 1845; the State of South Carolina seceded from the American Union, 1860; the first London performance of the opera *Madame Pompadour* was presented, 1923; the first atomic ice-breaker, the Russian *Lening*, began operating, 1959; Romuald Spawko, Polish ambassador to the United States, was granted political asylum in the United States, 1981; two Townsend Thoresen ferries collided off Harwich, with the loss of six lives, 1982; Today is the Feast Day of

St Ammon and his Companions, St Dominic of Silos, St Philogonius and St Ursicinus.

Lectures

National Gallery: Mari Griffith, "A Week Before Christmas (1811): Botticelli, *The Adoration of the Kings*", 1pm.

British Museum: Hilary Williams, "Queen Mary's Christmas Card Collection", 1.15pm.

Luncheons

Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Mr Malcolm Rifkind QC MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, held a luncheon yesterday at 1 Carlton Gardens, London SW1, in honour of Mr Erick Derycke, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium.

Foyles Literary Luncheon: Mr Sheridan Morley was in the chair at a Foyles Literary Luncheon held yesterday at Grosvenor House, London W1, in honour of Miss Maureen Lipman. Among those present were: Miss Jane Asher, Mrs Lynda Bellingham; Miss Julia McKenzie; Miss Hayley Miller; Mr Derek Nutter; Mr Nick Ross; Mr Neil Storr; Mrs Janet Sumner; Miss Victoria Wood.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Prince of Wales visits the Sea Association, Royal Naval Medical College, HMS St Albans, Gosport, and as President, Institute of the Community, visits the Gloucestershire Centre, Gloucestershire, Bristol. The Duke of Kent, President, Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, attends a luncheon to mark the centenary of Lord Rother, chairman of the fund, at the RAF Club, London W1.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment escorts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. The Queen's Guard, Scots Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 1.15pm. Band provided by the Coldstream Guards.

Substantial changes to rail services unlawful

LAW REPORT

20 December 1995

Regina v Director of Passenger Rail Franchising, ex parte Save Our Railways and others; Court of Appeal (Sir Thomas Bingham, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Waite and Lord Justice Otton); 15 December 1995

In specifying minimum service levels for railway passenger services for the initial letting of franchises, the director of passenger rail franchising was not permitted by the instructions issued by the Secretary of State for Transport to depart significantly from the services provided by British Rail immediately prior to franchising.

The Court of Appeal granted leave to appeal, refused to quash the franchising director's decisions specifying minimum passenger service levels for rail services operated by Great Western Trains Co Ltd, South West Trains Ltd and LTS Rail Ltd, and quashed the director's decisions in relation to those operated by Inter City East Coast Ltd, Midland Main Line Ltd and Network South Central Ltd.

The Railways Act 1993 established a statutory scheme for transferring the operation of rail passenger services into private ownership. The franchising

director was required to carry out functions under the Act in accordance with guidance and instructions from the Secretary of State for Transport. His instructions issued on 22 March 1994 provided by paragraph 18 that for the initial letting of franchises, the director's specification of minimum service levels for railway passenger services was "to be based on that being provided by BR immediately prior to franchising". Guidance in paragraph 23 provided that after the initial franchises, the services should, over time, be tailored more closely to demand.

In the first case, on 16 May 1995, the minimum service level specified for services operated by Great Western Trains Ltd was set at 86 per cent of the current BR level of service, by South West Trains Ltd, 89 per cent or 86 per cent, and by LTS Rail Ltd, 80 per cent or 69 per cent.

In the second case on 14 September 1995 the minimum service level for services operated by Inter City East Coast Ltd was set at 71 per cent, by Gatwick Express Ltd, 45 per cent, Midland Main Line Ltd,

75 per cent, and by Network South Central Ltd, 88 per cent or 77 per cent.

In the first case the applicants applied for leave to apply for judicial review on 16 August 1995 and in the second on 20 October 1995.

Owen Davies (Leigh Day & Co) for the applicants; Jeremy Sullivan QC (Treasury Solicitor) for the franchising director.

Sir Thomas Bingham MR, giving the court's judgment, said that the crux of the dispute concerned paragraph 18 and in particular the words "based on that being provided by BR immediately prior to franchising". The Secretary of State's instructions and guidance defined and circumscribed the director's statutory duty.

"Based on" was not a term of art and it was not an exact term. It permitted some latitude. It was obvious that every train timetable by BR need not continue to run. There might be changes, and within limits it was for the franchising director to rule on the extent of the changes. His was the primary judgment. But there was a limit to the changes which

might be made without ceasing to comply with the instruction in paragraph 18 and the guidance in paragraph 23.

The changes must be marginal, not significant or substantial. Give or take relatively minor changes, the minimum service level specified was to correspond reasonably closely with the pre-franchising BR specification.

Turning to the facts, the court had to work on the lower of the director's alternative specifications. The figures set for Great Western Trains Ltd and South West Trains Ltd did not compel the conclusion that the director was in breach of his statutory duty. In relation to LTS Rail Ltd, Inter City East Coast Ltd, Gatwick Express Ltd and Midland Main Line Ltd, he had not correctly understood or complied with the Secretary of State's instruction.

The delay in the first case in making the application was "undue". The application for certification – and mandamus would be refused on that ground – but the court would consider making a declaration in the case of LTS Rail. The delay in the second case could not be regarded as "undue" and relief would be granted.

Yang Hui Tan, Barrister

Hated, ridiculed and very late, almost nothing can now stop the privatisation of Britain's railways, says **Christian Wolmar**

Amazing but true: private rail is on track



InterCity East Coast
InterCity services between London and York, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Inverness. Revenue £206m in 1994-95. Opra received preliminary bids last week. Final bids likely in March 1996.



Midland Main Line
InterCity services between London and Bedford, Leicester, Nottingham, Derby, Sheffield and Leeds. Revenue £58m in 1994-95. Opra received preliminary bids last week. Final bids likely in March 1996.

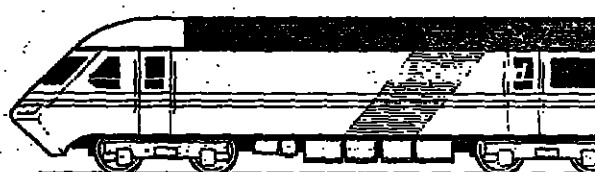


Great Western
InterCity services between London and Exeter, Plymouth, Penzance, Cardiff, Bristol and Swindon. Revenue £151m in 1994-95. Last Friday the Court of Appeal gave the go-ahead for imminent privatisation.

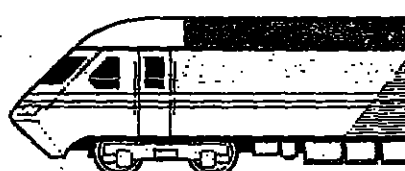


Gatwick Express
Shuttle service between London and Gatwick Airport. Revenue £27m in 1994-95. Opra received preliminary bids last week. Final bids likely in March 1996.

InterCity East Coast
Midland Main Line
Network SouthCentral
Gatwick Express Limited
South West Trains
Great Western
London, Tilbury and Southend Rail



Commuter service in London and the South-east.
Revenue £53m in 1994-95. Last Friday the Court of Appeal gave the go-ahead for imminent privatisation.



Stagecoach won the franchise yesterday. From the end of March 1996 the bus company will take responsibility for running services between London and Berkshire, Surrey, Hampshire, Portsmouth, Bournemouth, Weymouth and Exeter. Revenue in 1994-95: £230m.



Commuter services in the South-east between London and Maidstone, Brighton, Eastbourne, Portsmouth, Bournemouth and Gatwick Airport. Revenue £157m in 1994-95. Opra received preliminary bids last week. Final bids likely in March 1996.

ROUTES AND REVENUES: THE COUNTDOWN TO PRIVATISATION

If the newly privatised trains run to the same schedule as the privatisation process, there are going to be a lot of angry passengers. It took more than three years between the launch of the policy in a White Paper in July 1992 to yesterday's announcement of the first private operators. Yet, when the White Paper was published, John MacGregor, then transport secretary, said the first privatised trains would be running in April 1994. In fact it will be exactly two years later, in April 1996, when Stagecoach starts running South West Trains which, presumably, will soon be kitted out in its livery of white with an orange, blue and red stripe. At around the same time, the management buyout teams which successfully bid for Great Western trains and London, Tilbury and Southend will also be proudly painting their new logos to obliterate any mention of British Rail.

To say it has been a bumpy journey would be like saying a roller-coaster gives you a smooth and comfortable ride. The delays, legal setbacks and chaos, not to say panic, behind the scenes are testimony not only to the project's unpopularity but to its shaky basis. Rail privatisation has been driven through much like the poll tax, to which it has often been compared, with virtually no supporters outside the Government and many well-informed objectors.

The successful challenge last week by the campaigners turned out to be a Pyrrhic victory. Although the Appeal Court judges largely ruled in their favour, arguing that the minimum service levels - Passenger Service Requirements as Mr Salmon, the franchising director, has chosen to call them - had been set too low in contravention of Government guidelines, the judgment did nothing to stop the process. Hence on Monday Sir George Young simply issued new guidelines which, he argues, allow Mr Salmon more leeway. There may well be further legal challenges but the judiciary is reluctant to stop a process they see as having legitimately gone through Parliament, so privatisation is being bulldozed through.

Media coverage of the privatisation process has been so uniformly negative that the general public may have been confused into thinking it was not going ahead. In fact, despite the delays and the legal battles, which have seen campaigners successfully challenge the very basis of the franchise process by questioning the minimum standards set out in the agreements, the railways will have been largely privatised by the time of the next general election.

The franchise process is the key part of rail privatisation because it involves passenger trains and the public. It is a unique form of privatisation dreamt up by a Government that was keen to see competition between different train operators. BR was divided into 25 groups of lines, ranging from small self-contained railways such as Chiltern and London, Tilbury and Southend, to large groupings of commuter services such as South West Trains, the rural and regional lines of Regional Railways and InterCity services such as East Coast and Great Western Railway.

Because of the extra money that operators now have to pay Railtrack and the train leasing companies, all of them will be loss making, even on InterCity which used to be profitable, and will therefore need subsidy. Mr Salmon has been putting these services out to tender with the winning bidder expected to be the one that requests least subsidy. So far seven have been put

Paradoxically, while the rail-travelling public is most interested in the franchising and what benefits or problems it will cause them, the Government - and the Chancellor in particular - has been most interested in the lucrative parts of the railway. Fattened up, via the franchising companies, with some £500m extra subsidy for each of the next two years, the rolling stock companies and Railtrack will bring in a total of £3bn. The rolling stock companies were sold last month for £1.8bn and Railtrack is expected to attract at least £1.5bn in late spring.

The chaos is testimony to the uncertain and shaky basis of the rail project

One source of concern to rail users is that, as the *Independent* reported on Monday, the £500m extra subsidy runs out in 1997/98 when support to the railways returns to pre-privatisation levels. Rail experts such as Richard Hope, an adviser to the Transport Select Committee, argue that such a steep cut in subsidy will either lead to reduced services or severe financial difficulties for the operators. However, yesterday Mr Salmon pointed to the fact that Stagecoach will receive an average of £49m per year over the seven-year life of the franchises, compared with the £63.5m currently budgeted for BR. If all 25 franchises bring in savings like this, the Government will get away with the subsidy cut. This will be the key battleground. Stagecoach's only way of making that level of saving will be by taking on the unions and reducing staffing levels which it sees as far too high. Industrial strife appears inevitable unless the unions cave in quickly. The drivers will be the key since they are irreplaceable, requiring nearly a year's training and specialised route knowledge before being allowed on the tracks.

Whatever the outcome, rail privatisation is becoming a reality. However, the campaigners against it can console themselves that the delay is a big setback for the Government. To prove itself, privatisation needed a couple of years of operation before a general election to show a sceptical public that private operators would bring improvements and, above all, investment. Indeed, this was the point made by a few troubled Tory MPs who met Sir George Young, the Transport Secretary, yesterday to express fears about reduced services.

The Government has no chance of meeting its latest target of privatising 51 per cent of the railway by April 1996 but it will draw some comfort from the fact that a large section of railway services will be in private hands by the election, unless the Grim Reaper hacks away the Tory majority before then.

The greatest show on earth seems a harmless enough phrase, the sort one expects to see quoted out of context outside a theatre somewhere. But, it emerges, the phrase is strictly copyright and belongs to the Barnum & Bailey circus of America. This, the British circus impresario Jim Rose has discovered to his potential cost. He is being sued by Barnum's for describing his own big top extravaganza as "the greatest show on earth" in his advertising material.

With this in mind, I am hereby describing this diary as "a pretty good column". I should warn all other scribbles that the phrase is now in copyright and *sub judice*; and anyone who describes their own musings as "a pretty good column" will be hearing from my legal advisers.

Grave news for all those Christmas chefs seeking, at the last minute, a slab of Edam to adorn the dining-room table on Christmas Eve. Top London fromagerie Paxton & Whitfield in Jermya Street, the proverbial big cheeses, don't sell it over the counter any more. They say this is because it is now deemed to be in the bracket of what cheese snobs deem "plastic" brands.

The cheese world hierarchy is evidently a complex one, demanding far more than simple texture or taste as a criterion for inclusion. I asked the man at Paxton's to elucidate. "We only sell farmhouse cheeses over the counter," he proffered stiffly. "A farmhouse cheese is one which has been milked from only one herd of cows." So that explains it, I replied with a cheesy (lower grade) grin.

My award for the most lyrical Early Day Motion of the week goes to Plaid Cymru MP Cynog Dafis for his



proposed debate on aerial advertising. Mr Dafis's schoolteachers did not, perhaps, instil in him the need for the occasional full stop, but they certainly showed him how to use language.

His motion reads: "That this House rejects the outrageous extension in the scope of advertising in the sky provided for by the Civil Aviation (Aerial Advertising) Regulations 1995, believing that the large-scale proliferation of advertising by means of aircraft and signs attached to balloons and helicopters would be a possible source of danger to birds and aircraft, a source of light pollution, a waste of resources, a source of carbon dioxide emissions from aircraft and helicopter fuel, a force promoting irrational consumerism, contrary to the policies underlying the designation of some areas as national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty and conservation areas and an unwarranted intrusion into the freedom to see the sky, which has been enjoyed as a source of tranquillity and beauty by human beings for millennia."

Let's see if a Department of the Environment civil servant can match that prose.

Radio 3's Year of British Music and Culture ends next week after broadcasting the works of 650 British composers, 300 of them living. A "remarkable and unique" achievement, said the Radio 3 controller, Nicholas Kenyon, yesterday. Perhaps so, though two names in the

650 catch my eye. The first is Bach, not generally known as an English gent (but he did stay here for some time, says a Radio 3 spokeswoman).

The second is John Lennon, very much an Englishman, very much a great composer. But he was credited in the season for writing such songs as "Yesterday" and "Michelle", both very much Paul McCartney songs. The reason here, according to Radio 3, is that Lennon-McCartney compositions are entered in the Radio 3 database as joint compositions, but it seems a clerk just entered these songs under John Lennon's name "to save time and space". So now Paul McCartney knows how Trotsky must have felt when he was written out of history.



Lennon and, or ... remind me ...

Most would-be actors do part-time menial work, such as waiting in restaurants, selling in shops or even loo-cleaning, to pay the rent while their

real career is still proverbially waiting in the wings. More innovative than these, however, are Adam Meggido, Phil Pickard and Simon Lenagan - all in their mid twenties - who have set up a Soho-based teleshows company in conjunction with their own theatre company, Counterpoint.

"The idea," explains Meggido, 25, is that the money we make from the teleshows is used to fund Counterpoint, which does four productions a year." When in production, as they are now with Dion Boucicault's *The Streets of Dublin* at the Brixton Shaw Theatre, the company of 12 splits into those who will act, and those who will sell. They swap every production. "The system works very well," says Meggido. "We are virtually the only self-funding theatre company in Britain. And, of course, let's not forget the business side. Because we're all actors, we are all pretty good at teleshows."

It's the time of year when the words "Moss Bros" are muttered rather a lot; and nobody is more aware of this than one Monty Moss, the company's president. I bear duty has caused him to abandon his preferred routine of kitchen supper in front of the telly, in favour of partygoing, much to the surprise of his friends.

"He hates these kinds of things," they whispered to each other *sotto voce* until at one recent black-tie dinner the sight of Moss circulating the room caused a business acquaintance to go up and ask him why he was there. If he was expecting a line about "getting more social in my seventies," he should have known better. Moss smiled coyly: "Just doing a pre-Christmas stock check."

Eagle Eye



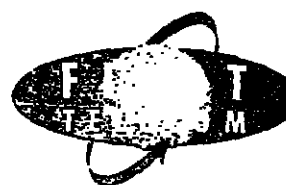
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Locked into a cycle of misery

The filthy conditions, poor staffing and austere regime revealed yesterday at Holloway prison is the story of yet another jail that has been allowed to descend into Victorian squalor. A prison that was once a proud example of penal reform has been allowed to deteriorate because of staff shortages, financial cutbacks, a security clamp-down, a reduction in educational and recreational programmes and a policy of locking inmates in their cells for longer periods.

Let us not forget that many of the women in Holloway are not there for particularly serious offences. A number were incarcerated after failing to pay a fine for not having a television licence. Many are on remand and have not been found guilty of any offence. In short, neither the criminality of the women, nor indeed the risk of escape, warranted a regime in Holloway under which, according to the head of prison visitors, many women are locked in their cells for 23 hours a day.

But the Holloway crisis raises broader issues beyond the particular prison. Like the Strangeways riot in 1989, it goes to the heart of current penal policy. Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, has some serious questions to answer.

The appalling conditions at Holloway — so bad that the Chief Inspector of Prisons cut short his inspection to make known his findings — could easily be reproduced elsewhere in the country because of changes in government policy. As a result, only an optimist could say that Holloway will prove to be exceptional in the coming years.

At the Conservative Party conference in October, the Home Secretary announced measures designed to send prisoners to jail for longer. He proposes that second-time violent and sex offend-

ers should get life and prisoners should enjoy reduced remission. These initiatives could increase the population in jail by up to 20,000 in two years.

Then there are the cuts in prison service funding announced in last month's Budget — more than 10 per cent over three years. And staff are now expected to place greater emphasis on security, following Sir John Latham's report, published in October, into escapes from Whitemoor and Parkhurst prisons. As a result, prison officers are going to find themselves more thinly stretched. Already, as a result of shrinking budgets, record numbers of prisoners and political demands for tougher regimes, governors are cutting back on work, welfare and education programmes and home visits.

Put these developments together and you could get the sort of deterioration in prison conditions that General Sir David Ramsbotham has described at Holloway.

The danger is that the Government will ignore a deterioration that could leave the prison system vulnerable to disturbances on a Strangeways scale. We now know that Holloway's board of prison visitors alerted ministers to what was going on a number of times over the past two years. The Government had, it should be said in mitigation, recently released additional funds to improve conditions. But ministers were clearly prepared to let inmates live for some time in inadequate circumstances.

The governor of Holloway must explain the management failures that took place in her establishment. But Michael Howard must also tell us, as he plans an expanded prison population, cuts in prison funding and tougher, longer sentences, how he can ensure that Holloway's misery will not be repeated across the country.

Mr Murdoch goes over the top

Rugby league — you know, the one Will Carling doesn't play — is discovering the price of selling its soul to Rupert Murdoch. In exchange for an £87m investment in a new Super League, Mr Murdoch's company News Corporation will have a veto over transfers by the top players. Imagine if a media magnate had this kind of power on the football field: Stan Collymore's £8.5m transfer from Nottingham Forest to Liverpool could have been blocked by a mere nod from Mr M. Thanks to a clause in the contracts signed by the Super League's top players, this may well happen in rugby league.

Still, all's fair in love, war and commerce. These top players are getting large sums of money for signing their independence away. And News Corporation is pouring millions of pounds into rugby league clubs which were heading for broke. To the dismay of the local communities who turned out to support their league teams whatever the weather, the game is being changed to suit the living-room rather than the grandstand. But as rugby league can no longer support itself on the takings from the turnstile, it is inevitable that the broadcast media should get involved with the future of the sport.

The big problem with the Super League deal is not the link between sport and business — it is Rupert Murdoch. News Corporation is fast developing a monopoly on international sports broadcasting. This allows him to bid up the price viewers pay to watch sport on TV. But it also gives him considerable power over the sports he broadcasts. Ideally, rugby league clubs

should have been able to choose between several competing broadcast companies, negotiating their terms and preserving their control over the game. Instead, they were faced with a single "take it or leave it" Murdoch deal, the terms of which are only just starting to become clear.

Rupert Murdoch has crossed the boundary between controlling the broadcast and controlling the sport itself. At least with football, Mr Murdoch still has to negotiate with the Football Association: the media mogul cannot make the final decision. The contracts for top players in the Super League demonstrate just how much power Mr Murdoch wants over the day to day running of the sport. No one mentioned this when the deal was announced in March. How much more is there still to be revealed?

In his defence, Mr Murdoch might argue that his intervention will improve competition on the field. Right now Wigan are far and away the best team in the league. If Mr Murdoch uses his veto to stop good players flocking to Wigan, other clubs might improve. More evenly matched teams will make better rugby league. But there are better ways to achieve this than handing over power to a multinational.

Power over broadcasting should remain separate and distinct from power over sport. The extent of Mr Murdoch's power over rugby league is unacceptable. One fears for the future of sport should this principle be extended to other games, as probably will be the case. The Monopolies and Mergers Commission should watch out — this is not in the public interest.

Nicked at the cutting edge of bourgeois life

Today's short story has been made possible with funds from the Home Office, though they don't know this yet. Thanks!



MILES KINGSTON

When the police declare an amnesty on people carrying knives, it is not just the schoolchildren of the nation they are appealing to, our dear little schoolchildren armed to the teeth with guns, knives, cutlasses and machetes. Nor is it merely to the criminal classes who sally forth festooned with daggers, confident in the knowledge that they will not meet a policeman carrying so much as a penknife. No, it is also the dear old middle-class police are trying to reach, middle-class households such as those run by Edward and Ursula...

"Knife-sharpening baffles me," said Edward, waving a kitchen knife and a steel at his wife, Ursula. "On Christmas Day my father used to get out a steel like this and a carving knife like this and he used to stroke one gently against the other in a manner reminiscent of Yehudi Menuhin playing the violin until magically the knife was so sharp that you could shave with it."

"How do you know?" said Ursula. "Did he ever shave with it?"

"He used to shave the turkey with

turbed there, not because anyone thought they would come in useful again, but because nobody dared put their hand down the back of the drawer in case they got cut, though the danger was minimal.

"I thought you were going to throw those away?" said Ursula.

"It's not that easy to throw away knives," said Edward. "It's like throwing away glass. It becomes a hazard for someone else."

"Oh, for heaven's sake, just wrap them all up and throw them away! Or ... or ... join the amnesty!"

"The what?"

"They said on the news this morning that there's an amnesty for knives. You just go to the nearest police station and hand your knives in. No questions asked. You just pop them in a box."

"Yes, but that's for fighting knives. That's for people who carry knives and go around hoping to stick up other people, or rather, to unstick them. It's not for people who go round carrying knives hoping to get a chance to slice some bread!"

"Look, they will accept any kind of knife! They'll take our lot! You yourself said it was getting dangerous, last time you cut your finger..."

"Yes, but..."

Half an hour later Edward had



Diana spends Christmas with her real friends

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Not a question of 'good' and 'bad' teachers

From Mr John Humberstone
Sir: Chris Woodhead's article ("Schools need much more than money", 16 December) is a demonstration of why so many teachers find his performance as Chief Inspector of Schools in the "unsatisfactory" department.

To concentrate on one issue, that of class size, his statement

Good teachers may be able to teach even better when they have 20 children rather than 30 in their class, but there is absolutely no reason to believe that it is the size of class that makes a bad teacher bad

is absurdly absolute. For a start, it encourages the view that there are "good" teachers and "bad" teachers, when most of us would happily admit to being somewhere in between, and to find it easier to teach 30 literate, numerate, well-motivated students than 10 who are semi-literate and disaffected.

Second, the debate about class size does not exist in an academic vacuum. We are talking at a time when class size has increased, particularly in the last year, after the Government's refusal to fund the pay award for teachers. There has been a 28 per cent increase in classes of more than 30 between 1994 and 1995 in England, and the number of students taught in classes of more than 40 has increased from 14,057 to 18,223 in

the same period (source: *Hansard* 24 October, 1995).

Schools have usually managed to put the disadvantaged and disaffected into small groups. Perhaps the real significance of these figures is not that the brightest may have to become used to being taught in groups of 40, but that the least able may not be able to be taught in groups of 20.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN HUMBERSTONE
Kirkby-in-Furness, Cumbria
18 December

From Mr David Morgan
Sir: That schools need more money is not in dispute. What requires constant re-affirmation is that they do need much more money, and the Chief Inspector does our schools a disservice in weakening the argument for this.

Granted that the key ingredient of an effective education is good teaching, we should be aiming to maximise its impact by providing the conditions needed by the good teacher to do the job properly — adequate premises, a sufficient supply of textbooks and, above all, a reasonable pupil-teacher ratio. We are now in the run-up to the general election, with both major parties seemingly committed to tight control of government spending.

With so many worthy areas of

public provision starved of funds, the champions of education should speak with one voice. Governments need no help in finding excuses for skimping on education.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID MORGAN
Abingdon, Oxfordshire
17 December

The writer is a school governor.

From Mrs Cheryl Johnston
Sir: For too long I have read of the failings of teachers. We have become the target of both the major parties.

I have been a teacher since 1969 in both primary and secondary schools. I have been a dedicated professional, I have not done anything to deserve some weak teachers, but there are not also weak doctors, lawyers, bank clerks, painters, decorators and even journalists?

Yours faithfully,
CHERYL JOHNSTON
Felstowe, Suffolk
14 December

From Mr C. G. Jermy
Sir: What about trendy inspectors? In the Fifties, Sixties, Seventies and possibly longer, many experienced, well-qualified, devoted but traditional teachers knew who the enemy was.

Yours faithfully,
C. G. JERMY
London, N12

Labour intensive

From Mr Jeff Rooker, MP
Sir: Having not seen BBC2's series about the Labour Party, *The Wilderness Years* ("Welcome back from the wilderness", 19 December), I remain at a loss as to the purpose of the enterprise.

Much of what I have read in the press must have something to do with the fact that not everyone invited to appear was prepared to do so, even though the producers found this difficult to understand.

I am amazed that the lure of a camera is so powerful that it per-

suades senior Labour Party members in January/March this year to participate, knowing it would be broadcast in the run-up to a general election. What is the gain?

We do not have to keep talking about a recent distressing period of history to put across the case that we have learnt the lessons from that period. At least I hope not.

Yours,
JEFF ROOKER
MP for Birmingham Perry Barr (Lab)
House of Commons
London, SW1

The taxman triumphant

From Mr Ian Barlow
Sir: Richard Jones and his staff at the Large Groups office of the Inland Revenue should be congratulated for improving the Revenue's appreciation of the way business operates ("The taxman triumphs", 12 December).

With his sights on a clear picture, 18 December, but his "customers" should be under no illusions of the implications of this progress.

The key is in Mr Jones' phrase "better awareness of what they (ie businesses) are doing". The one-stop shop approach of the Large Groups Office, where tax matters previously handled by up to 20 separate offices are gathered under one roof, allows more vigorous examination of large companies' tax affairs. This country's legislature offers little protection to companies whose affairs come under close scrutiny by the Revenue — examinations which can encompass transactions going back five, 10 or 20 years.

Corporates can therefore expect to negotiate in an increasingly fierce environment as the Revenue increases its expertise. There are two issues arising. First, UK plc needs to ensure its tax affairs are watertight. Second, there is as yet no retrospective time limit on the Revenue's powers to examine a company's transactions — generally a limit of three years from the date a tax return is filed is in place in the US, for example.

Increased understanding on both sides deserves encouragement, however, recent developments, and the wide-ranging powers currently enjoyed by the Revenue, lead me to suspect the odds may be moving inexorably in its favour.

Yours faithfully,
IAN BARLOW
UK Head of Tax
KPMG
18 December

Jonah and the Tooth Fairy

From Mr R. Kimber
Sir: Your front-page story (18 December) regarding Canon Brian Andrews telling his congregation that neither Santa Claus nor the Tooth Fairy really exist included a comment by the Rt Rev Dr David Jenkins that "the teaching of Christianity would benefit from the separation of fairyland from reality".

Would he agree that children should also be taught that biblical fables such as Noah's Ark or Jonah in the belly of the whale be included?

Yours sincerely,
R. KIMBER
Kingsley, E1
18 December

From Mr Stephen Howarth
Sir: Reindeer may not be very strong, as Lars Breimer observes (letter, 19 December) but they are certainly strong enough to pull a man in a sledge. It was a reindeer pulling a sledge that saved the life of Jan Baalsrud, a Norwegian soldier, sent from Britain in March 1943 with 11 others to sabotage a

northern airbase in their Nazi-occupied homeland. The mission was betrayed and all the participants except Baalsrud were shot dead or captured. Baalsrud escaped into the snow barefoot and minus one toe, which had been shot off by a stray bullet. His only hope was to strike out for neutral Sweden, 80 miles across the mountains.

The journey took two months and would never have succeeded but for his own powers of endurance and the impressive

courage of other Norwegians who risked their own lives to save him from execution as a spy. Passed on from one to another in an anonymous chain, he was brought at last to a high plateau, where two Lapps strapped him into their leading reindeer's sledge. Followed by a herd of 500 reindeer, Baalsrud was pulled in this manner for two days until they reached the frontier, where a German patrol encountered them. Under fire from the patrol, the entire herd stampeded across the final barrier, a semi-frozen lake. The shots did not stop until they reached the Swedish shore.

It probably helped that, by then, Baalsrud had lost half his normal weight and was only five and a half stone. Whether the reindeer could have done the same with Father Christmas is another question.

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN HOWARTH
Shelton, Nottinghamshire
19 December

From Canon Owen Vigeon
Sir: When my eldest daughter was seven years old, we overheard her instructing her kid brother on Christmas Eve in these words:

"You see, Tim, Father Christmas is a game we children have to play with grown-ups, so that they won't be disappointed."

Are vicarages the last refuge of the Enlightenment?
Yours faithfully,
OWEN VIGEON
Bromsgrove
19 December

No BSE from SAEs

From Dr Mark Szczelkun
Sir: Richard Huddy need not worry about BSE and stamps (Letters, 12 December). All Royal Mail stamps use glue derived from non-animal sources. I am less sure about envelopes, however, and he would do best to check with the manufacturers involved.

Yours faithfully,
MARK SZCZELKUN
Department of Biochemistry
University of Bristol
Bristol
19 December

From The Rev David F. Flavell
Sir: Why does the consumer have to stop eating beef just because the British farmer cannot provide a guaranteed BSE-free product?

This morning my local supermarket is charging £3.90 a pound for steak. In America the price for the same product is only £1.60 (\$2.40). I would like to be able to buy this better value and BSE-free meat myself, but the Common Agricultural Policy will not let me.

No doubt American beef has its own contamination problems, but at those sort of prices I'm prepared to take my chances. At least I would like to have the choice. Can anybody give me one good reason why I should not?

Yours sincerely,
DAVID F. FLAVELL
Peterlee,
Co Durham
19 December

Snobs labelled?

From Mr Joel Down
Sir: Please do not be so patronising about high-street shopping ("Christmas challenge in the high street", 12 December). I imagine that many of your readers, like myself, have neither the time nor the money to shop at leisure in London's designer outlets. We have to make do with Next, H & M, Marks & Spencer, or our "average disjunct high streets" for our Christmas gifts.

Surely it is the thought, not the label, that counts.
Yours faithfully,
JOEL DOWN
Rodehemersham, Kent
19 December

Bouncing Euro

From Mrs Jean Brazier
Sir: So, we are going to have a marquisal as our currency (Euro is a kind of kangaroo). I assume that a hundredth of a Euro will be a Joey.

Yours faithfully,
JEAN BRAZIER
Bristol

From Mr Geoff Sherlock
Sir: As it has been decided to call the new unit of currency for Europe the "Euro", will financial experts be called "Eurologists" in future?

Yours faithfully,
GEOFF SHERLOCK
Amersham, Buckinghamshire
15 December

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 6DL, and include a daytime telephone number. Please cite page reference and date for any articles mentioned. Letters may be faxed to 0171-293 2856, or sent by e-mail to letters@independent.co.uk. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret that, owing to the large volume of correspondence received, we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

Buy

Ruin

MY PORTER

NEW Jane F
Is are go

JAN 10 1996

comment

Buying more than just a good education

If the independent schools' sector is going to survive in a changing world, it must shed its unpleasant ethos

The bill has just come in from my son's London prep school at the end of term. Tucked neatly inside was a glossy leaflet, the bulletin of the Friends of Independent Schools. It is a document sent out with most private school bills in Britain.

Am I a Friend of Independent Schools? Well, each of my four children has spent some time in one, at differing points in their school careers. But a Friend? I suppose so, yes. I do not indulge in that liberal guesstimate that uses the private sector but blithely and apologetically. I could say: "Well, I live in Lambeth, worst schools in the country, so you see, really, we had little choice. If I lived in Potters Bar or somewhere, of course it would be different." Maybe it would, maybe it wouldn't, but like most people who can afford it, I would be secure in the knowledge that I still had the choice to go private if I didn't like the way things were going in a state school. So, as I started to read this bulletin, I was willing to accept the sobriquet "Friend".

That was until I actually read it. It turned out to be not a general newsletter about exciting and innovative best practice ideas in private schools, but almost entirely devoted to anti-Labour propaganda. Without any actual untruth, its cumulative effect is misleading about the state of Labour policy.

True, this time last year the Labour Party made a slight dog's breakfast of its policy, when David Blunkett mentioned some possibilities, including an end to charitable status and imposing VAT on private schools, only to have to eat his words by lunchtime when Tony Blair repudiated him. But who

in their right mind really thinks Tony Blair's secret agenda is to get into power and effectively demolish private education as we know it as he steps inside No 10? Even though Labour's past policy has been antagonistic towards private education and there will always be a strong vein of sentiment against it, Tony Blair is unlikely to loosen his grip on this key policy in the face of a consistent 70 per cent public opposition to abolishing private schools.

Even the pledge on the assisted places scheme, which Labour has said it will abandon, is watered down, with talk of special schemes for local education authorities to buy places in private schools for gifted or musical or other exceptional children. Schools may in future have to earn their charitable status by showing they offer some of their facilities to others in the community. But this hardly amounts to a Red Peril.

Is this policy so threatening as to justify a whole campaign addressed to private school parents? In the bulletin, the director of Isis, the independent schools' lobby that produces the leaflet, writes: "It is unclear to what extent so-called 'New' Labour has undergone a genuine conversion to an acceptance of parents exercising choice in ways which are contrary to Old Labour's long-entrenched prejudices against independent education and academic selection. It will almost certainly remain unclear until Labour in government has to resolve its internal conflicts."

"We know Labour would attack choice by phasing out the assisted places scheme. We know that attacking the charitable status of independent schools is back on the agenda."



POLLY TOYNEE

It gives children the sense that anyone from a state school is an unwashed alien

"We know it still upholds the comprehensive ideal: academic selection, whether in independent or the remaining state grammar schools, is anathema."

"We know that, whatever fine words may come from the national spokesmen of 'New' Labour about co-operation between maintained and independent sectors, Old Labour at local level takes every opportunity to attack it."

And opposite this commentary there is a glowing interview with Gillian Shephard, who is headlined, unsurprisingly, as "declaring her wholehearted support for the independent sector."

When I questioned David Woodhead, the Isis director, he said it was their job to challenge Labour policy and, anyway, they had printed an interview with David Blunkett in the full Isis magazine recently.

By now I am affronted by the idea that because I send my child to a pri-

ate school I must be a fully paid-up Tory. It reminds me of a number of uncomfortable occasions in meetings with some parents and teachers, where the same crude assumption has been made. Of course, many teachers and heads are not like that at all; but when you buy into the private sector, you risk buying into a whole People-Like-Us ethos, and People Like Us means Tory.

Parents have all kinds of obvious reasons for choosing private schools—higher standards, more creative activities, smaller classes, better facilities and better exam results. But many private schools also like to suggest that their children will breathe in a "better" social ethos, or at least fewer anti-social attitudes.

A friend of mine's 10-year-old came home from his private school last week, a boy in constant trouble, not for real wickedness, but loss of every possession and perpetual detention for maths. His school has a comprehensive nearby, fairly black, and he reports that the most frequent insult he gets from his teachers is, "You look as if you come from XXXX!" You have the manners of an XXXX boy! You should be in XXXX!" (the neighbourhood comprehensive). Being politically aware, incensed by snobbery and, anyway, flippant, he finally asked one of them with faux naivety, "Why? What's wrong with XXXX?" This was the mystifying answer: "Oh, they probably play reggae music on their fire alarm!"

So the private sector may buy you attitudes you do not like at all, redolent of an unthinking caste consciousness, racist, snobbish, giving the children a sense that anyone from a state school is an unwashed alien.

Considering that only 7.2 per cent

of children go to private schools, this is hardly likely to equip them well for the real world out there. Except, perhaps, that some of them will manage to live for ever in a little sheltered cocoon among those bankers, accountants, lawyers, stockbrokers or army officers who never mix socially from cradle to grave with anyone of a different background.

Well, what do you expect, I hear some readers retort, if you will insist on sending your child into a privileged elitist enclave?

This is what I expect: a private education system that reflects a world outside that has changed beyond all recognition. The knee-jerk, pull-up-the-drawbridge-and-keep-the-oiks-out attitude exuded by some teachers in these schools comes from a bygone age, and they'd better get real. More than half of all children now in private schools have parents both of whom were state educated. The Blair victory is so fearsome in itself that it is a sign of the times that at last across the old class battle lines.

If the private sector wants to offer "values" along with better computer facilities and science labs, it had better stop, take a deep breath, and consider just what these "values" are. Are children to be taught generosity, consideration for others, social awareness, a measure of humility at their own unearned good fortune and a sense of obligation to the community in which many may occupy positions of influence? Or are they simply to learn obsequiousness of the monied kind: "My parents paid for me to come here so I can earn more, vote Tory, pay fewer taxes and look after my own?"

Sons damaged by fathers behaving badly

Catherine Hepburn examines the psychological effects of bad paternal care on inner-city boys

Studies of "psychological disorders" in boys have focused almost exclusively on mothers' care and so have resulted in widespread blaming of mothers, especially single mothers. I wanted to find out if fathers' care was important; in particular, whether having a neglectful, hostile or abusive father in the home, or an uninvolved, unreliable absent father, made a difference to a boy's behaviour. I presented my findings to the British Psychological Society's annual meeting yesterday.

For boys, it seems that a bad father is worse than no father. In my study, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, I talked to a group of 99 young men about the quality of care that their fathers provided throughout their childhood and adolescence. The young men, in their late teens and early twenties, were from inner-city Islington, in north London. What emerged was that those who had poor care from their father—either when he was present in the home or absent following divorce—were more likely to develop behaviour problems in their teens than those who had had good paternal care.

Poor paternal care from present fathers was experienced by around a quarter of the young men I saw. Typical recollections described a father who was never there, a distant figure uninvolved in his son's life, his schooling, his friends, his interests and his general welfare. Some fathers, when they were around, were hostile, rejecting and physically violent.

Experiences such as these often led to high rates of chronic behaviour problems in adolescence, such as truancy, theft, aggression and disruptiveness at school—seen in almost half of those with poor paternal care, in contrast to only a fifth of boys who had good paternal care.

The young men also discussed relationships with fathers who had left following divorce. Half of them had experienced family breakdown and all of them stayed with their mothers.

Around a third of father-son relationships ended completely after divorce and their fathers were never seen again. There was some indication that this was more likely to happen if the boy was very young at the time of the divorce and where mothers had remarried.

Contact sometimes ended for very good reasons, especially where the separation was caused by the father's violence to the mother. Boys with such memories quite understandably expressed anger, and fierce loyalty to their mother. One son commented: "I don't want nothing to do with him. I changed my surname because I don't want him to find me."

I was surprised to find that boys with no relationship at all with their absent father were not more disadvantaged than those whose father had maintained good, regular and reliable contact. In both these groups, around one fifth developed behaviour problems. Mothers certainly compensated for the lack of a father in many cases and in their sons' eyes had done a good job of bringing them up alone.

In contrast, those who had a

'I changed my surname because I don't want him to find me'

poor relationship with their father after divorce were more than twice as likely to develop behaviour problems. Poor relationships were described in terms of their father's unreliability in turning up for arranged visits or forgetting birthdays and Christmas presents. More than half of the boys with these experiences had behaviour problems in their teens.

The research puts fathers in the picture. The research suggests that poor-quality father-son relationships are more damaging than being brought up only by a single mother. A disrupted, chaotic paternal presence after divorce fails to provide the security that boys need to avoid the problems of adolescence. Fathers should be made more generally aware of the importance of their role as parents, and those who have not been violent to their families may need support to maintain a positive involvement with children after divorce. Good parental care is the key to healthy adolescent development, rather than who or how many parents provide that care.

The writer is senior lecturer in developmental psychology at the University of Westminster.

Ruined by a lie, not a lifestyle

Henry Porter analyses the tragedy of David Ashby, the homosexual MP who misjudged the spirit of the times

It is difficult today not to feel extremely sorry for David Ashby, the Conservative MP whose 20-day libel action against the *Sunday Times* ended in his humiliation and financial ruin. But as he sat with his head in his hands apparently weeping at the jury's verdict, it was also impossible not to wonder at the enormity of the damage that he has inflicted upon himself by bringing this case.

For the point that rings out clear from the Royal Courts of Justice is that shame lies not in the supposed homosexuality of a man in public life, but in the hypocrisy of his denial.

Nevertheless, the public response, I suspect, will be overwhelmingly sympathetic to Mr Ashby, and in the Commons MPs could only express regret at the way he had exposed himself and his family to the terrifying scrutiny of a libel trial. For everyone understands the forces that compelled him to fight the action to the last, and yet also the necessity of the newspaper proving its

Shame lies not in a man's supposed homosexuality but in the hypocrisy of denial

allegations. It was a tragic battle between reputation and truth, and with the evidence the *Sunday Times* had accumulated the latter was bound to be the victor.

Some 10 or 15 years ago, this same evidence might not have persuaded a jury. People were less likely to believe that public figures were gay, and consequently tended to give them the benefit of the doubt because of the great stigma attached to homosexuality.

Today things are very different. The ordinary people who sit on juries are much more comfortable with the idea of a politician's gayness. Moreover, they are familiar with the details of gay life. So they looked at the evidence less fearfully than they would have in the past, and decided that on balance Mr Ashby's behaviour suggested that he was in fact gay, and that he was therefore guilty of both hypocrisy and lying.

The tragedy of the case is that Mr Ashby did not appreciate how much things have changed and that his shame was in fact shameful. If he had been prepared to admit his relations with other men, or at least if he had let the *Sunday Times*'s accusation pass, people would not really have thought any the worse of him.

There are many gay MPs in Parlia-



Top: David Ashby, humiliated after his libel action against the 'Sunday Times'. Below: those who came out and prospered—from the left, Chris Smith MP, Sir Ian McKellen, Michael Barrymore, Rabbi Lionel Blue

ment, some living discreetly homosexual lives, while others, such as Chris Smith, the Shadow Heritage Secretary, are completely open about their sexuality. For Smith, it is simply not an issue: there is nothing any newspaper can discover in this area of his life that would embarrass him. But if you are going to be a gay MP, then Smith's constituency of Islington South is the best place for you.

Mr Ashby felt differently, perhaps because at 55 he is 11 years older than Smith and was brought up at a time when homosexuality was barely admitted, let alone tolerated. But he also probably believed that Conservative voters are more hostile to homosexuality. There may be some truth in this, and with a majority of only 979 in his Leicestershire North West constituency he calculated that it was bet-

ter to lie than to own up to what he regarded as a disgraceful and electorally damaging part of his life. It turned out to be a disastrous decision that was driven as much by his obvious ambivalence about his sexuality as any prejudice that might exist in his electorate.

It must also be said that lurking in his decision was probably an arrogance, or at least unworshipful hubris, which allowed him to pursue this thing to the bitter end, exposing his daughter to cross-examination and the shameful details of his marriage break-up to unforgiving public gaze.

Honesty would have been better, but it is difficult for such a man to gauge precisely how far attitudes have changed. People with different backgrounds are at variance on the matter of homosexuality in public life. And

some roles will be regarded as perfectly acceptable for a homosexual, while others not. An entertainer such as Michael Barrymore, who recently came out on a radio show, has not been substantially damaged. Nor has the actor Sir Ian McKellen or Rabbi Lionel Blue. But if a Home Secretary was suddenly to emerge from the closet the reactions might be slightly different.

What is clear at the moment is that the British people—to say nothing of their ferocious press—will not endure hypocrisy in public life. If you emphasise the importance of family values, as David Ashby did in the last election, you cannot then leave your wife for another man without risking exposure and indeed ridicule. Hypocrisy was his crime, not homosexuality. That should be the message that goes out to any-

one in public life who might be tempted to bring a similar action, and also to any libel lawyers who may persuade their clients, against their best interest, that they should pursue a case that is clearly hopeless.

In these conditions where there is growing but not yet absolute tolerance of homosexuality in public life, it is extremely difficult for politicians and their lawyers to make these line calls. We must believe that individuals, however prominent, should be allowed a degree of privacy, yet there is a point when the personal becomes political and the subject of public interest. That was reached when Mr Ashby's private circumstances became so hopelessly at odds with his public attitudes. The same was true of a Church of England bishop who after criticising gay priests was exposed as having had a brief encounter in a gentlemen's lavatory when a young man.

It demands great strength of character for a man of Mr Ashby's con-

There is a point when the personal becomes political and the subject of public interest

servatism to shun a plainly hypocritical stance. He is of the old-fashioned school of gay, best represented by the late Lord (Tom) Driberg, who bedded as many men as he could, at the same time managing to preserve a public respectability of sorts. For a time Driberg was pretty brazen about his activities, and he relied on influential friends to get him out of scrapes, but there was also something about his style, a certain devil-may-care panache, which added to his protection.

This can be deployed much more effectively today. One only has to look at the flourishing career of Michael Barrymore to see that he has turned his coming out into a personal triumph, rather gratifyingly in defiance of the press, which had been tormenting him for a number of years but which now must reluctantly admit its admiration.

Openness may not yet completely disarm prejudice, but surely anything is better than the terrible humiliation through which Mr Ashby has put himself and his family over the past three weeks. He has only himself and perhaps his lawyers to blame, but it is right to extend our sympathy to him and to be grateful that his melancholy example will clear the thoughts of many in his position.

way, Sunday's ball was hardly the most egalitarian gathering—every teenager had been vetted beforehand.

Sadly for the boys, who were so elegantly dressed, the girls looked more like Christmas decorations than the sartorial sophisticates they no doubt imagine themselves to be. But we shouldn't worry about any of these nymphets whisking him out of the singles' scene. As *Tatler*'s survey revealed, 12 per cent of teenagers defined a long-term relationship as one that lasts between one and two weeks.

The writer is editor of *Tatler*.

ANOTHER VIEW Jane Procter

Balls are good training for princes

Prince William's attendance at a couple of teenage balls in the past few days has aroused much consternation. But why? There is nothing new about this particular breed of organised party. Since the early Eighties privately educated teenagers have been buying tickets through friends to go to dances, which to all intents and purposes provide innocent fun. They are held in London, supervised by adults, and there is no alcohol.

So of course Prince William should have gone to the Mistletoe and Feathers balls. If he is denied this sort of experience, in later life he may not know how to react to the inevitable

sexual confrontations that he will face.

A recent *Tatler* survey of his peers concluded: "This time next year, as Prince William enters his second year at Eton, there is at least a 70 per cent chance that he will be drinking and smoking. He will probably have tried drugs and he might even have had sex. These assumptions are made not as a result of what we know of William's character, nor taking into consideration the habits of other Etonians. These are reasonable assumptions based on the results of our survey of teenagers, the children of affluent high achievers, the majority of whom have been privately educated."

Anyone who is shocked that the Prince and Princess of Wales have allowed their son to go on this harmless outing has no comprehension of how quickly young people grow up today. Admittedly, at 15½, Prince William was among the younger guests—but in two and a half years he may legally marry. Anyway, for the most part, all that the young revellers do is dance with each other, and there are battalions of patrolling adults to deter the more virulent perpetrators of wandering-hand disease. There is no opportunity for anything more grown-up—certainly not for

William, who was accompanied by a gun-toting bodyguard.

I am the mother of a 10-year-old girl, and don't know if I will want her to go to dances in just three years' time. But Prince William's big advantage (or disadvantage) is that he has an extremely loyal group of school-friends who help to lead off any Lolita in hotpants who may be eager to corrupt him or merely want to kiss the future heir for a dare.

Coming from Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, William probably enjoys having to queue up for a Coke or to collect his coat; it is the sort of treat he won't have for ever. Any-

tell me one good thing about your bank

Fed's quarter-point rate cut calms US market jitters

DIANE COYLE

Economics Correspondent

The US Federal Reserve yesterday cut interest rates by a quarter point, calming Wall Street which had braced itself for more turmoil in the equity and bond markets.

The Fed funds rate came down to 5.5 per cent, but the discount rate was left unchanged at 5.25 per cent. The news came after Monday's 100-point fall in the

Dow Jones index - the biggest one-day drop for more than four years.

In London, the FT-SE 100 index rallied after losing 37.6 points at one stage to close down 19.2 at 3,576.9. This made its loss over two days 65.7 points.

Wall Street's fright was due to fears that the US budget row had reduced the chance of a rate cut after yesterday's meeting. But yesterday bargain-hunters

helped share prices to steady before the Federal Reserve's meeting - despite a snowstorm that sent many Wall Street traders home early. The rate cut reversed a near-24-point fall in the Dow Jones industrial index, leaving it up 4.34 at 5,079.55 by mid-afternoon.

The fortunes of dollar and sterling were mixed during the day, but the pound ended more than a penny higher against the German mark at DM£2.2160.

Before the Fed meeting, Wall Street analysts were evenly divided about whether or not it would cut its key interest rate. Apart from differences of view about the state of the economy, many thought the central bank would wait for more progress towards a resolution of the budget wrangle between the President and Congress before making a move.

President Clinton said yesterday he was "not especially

worried about the financial market reactions to the budget row.

The second shut-down of the US government in just over a month started at the weekend. Mr Clinton met Congressional leaders for further talks yesterday, but officials said the deadline over tax and spending plans was unlikely to be broken quickly.

Official figures on the US economy in the third quarter, due to have been released yesterday, were delayed into the new year by the Federal government's closure. This made an optimistic forecast for growth in 1996 from the Conference Board the main economic news.

The employers' organisation said the Fed had already stimulated the economy as long-term interest rates had fallen in anticipation of cuts in its short-term policy rates. A revival of growth could make inflation

pick up next year. Gail Foster, chief economist, said there was little in recent economic data to support a cut in interest rates by the Fed. Her comments followed similarly cautious advice from the OECD's chief economist, Kumiharu Shigebara, speaking about the organisation's new economic forecasts yesterday. "I would vote for caution," he said.

Frank Fusari, an analyst at Mellon Bank in Pittsburgh, said: "There is a good case to be made for waiting for this budget situation to be resolved."

However, many financial market economists believe the flagging economy and low inflation justify a fall in the cost of borrowing. Ian Harwood of Kleinwort Benson said: "The economy is not starting recession in the face but the outlook is drab and there is no interruption of the trend towards lower inflation."

NatWest raises £2bn to expand investment

JOHN EISENHAMMER

Financial Editor

NatWest Group yesterday sold out of commercial banking in America and hinted that it may pass on some of the £2.2bn proceeds to its shareholders. Bancorp.

NatWest's New Jersey-based retail operation, has been sold to the acquisitive American group, Fleet Financial Corp.

But a significant share buy-back looks less likely than developing NatWest's surplus capital to build up its investment banking operations on both sides of the Atlantic and its UK retail position.

"Clearly after the Bancorp sale we are more than adequately capitalised, and the group is generating capital rapidly, so we do have the opportunity to make acquisitions across a range of businesses," said Derek Wanless, NatWest's chief executive.

Bancorp's sale took advantage of a wave of consolidation in US retail banking, which has seen deals worth around \$43bn. A relaxation of the rules preventing link-ups between state banks, and the need to cut

costs, has already prompted nine mergers or acquisitions this year. But the sale of Bancorp proved more difficult than expected and netted well less than the \$4bn price tag originally published by Goldman Sachs, NatWest's advisers.

The terms of the deal call for a cash payment of \$2.6bn, plus a deferred consideration of \$500m. This involves annual payments equal to about 50 per cent of Bancorp's earnings as part of Fleet Financial over a maximum period of eight years. There are also assets excluded from the sale worth \$400m, comprising a loan portfolio and the New York headquarters of NatWest Markets. The tax on the sale is not meant to be material, NatWest said.

Stewart Young of Charterhouse Tilney said the price was at the bottom end of expectations but that the market is relieved that a disposal has been achieved. NatWest shares closed yesterday up 19.5p at 649p, but analysts expected a drop today as the strong dilution effect on earnings per share is appreciated.

While saying it is reviewing a number of ways of using the

proceeds from the Bancorp sale, including returning capital to shareholders, NatWest set out its strategic priorities as developing its retail banking position in the UK, reinforcing NatWest Markets' global presence, notably in London and New York, and building up international private banking via Coutts.

NatWest is keen to acquire a fund management group in London and bolster its corporate finance capabilities in the City and New York. NatWest recently bought Gleacher & Co, a private M&A firm New York. But Mr Wanless said NatWest had "no plans to acquire a major US investment bank".

"We are keen to build up NatWest UK's strong position. We intend to get our cost-income ratio down by 10 per cent by the end of the decade and that clearly is going to require change and investment. The whole life and long-term savings markets are very attractive," Mr Wanless said.

Having turned around the loss on what has been a spectacularly costly investment, the decision to put Bancorp, with its 300 branches, up for sale marks a radical shift in NatWest's strategic thinking.

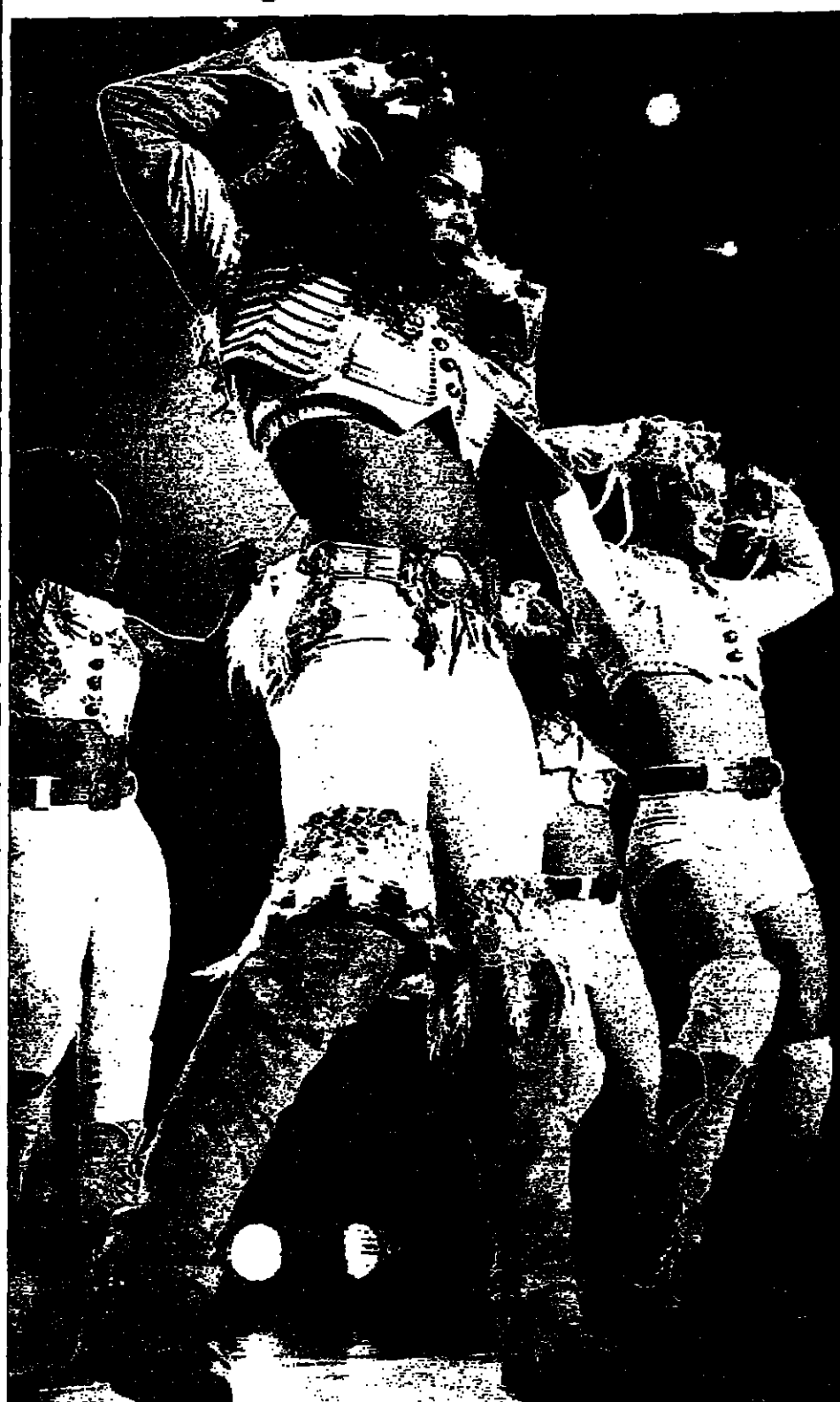
It had been considering strengthening the operation, but with the stakes raised by the frenzied pace of consolidation, NatWest decided it had little option but to get out altogether. "Bancorp could not maintain its competitive position long-term without further substantial investment. We do not believe such investment would yield acceptable returns," said Lord Alexander, NatWest's chairman.

Fleet, a bank holding company, is the 10th-largest bank in the US, with a market capitalisation of \$10bn.

US banking mergers in 1995

Wells Fargo or First Bank/First Interstate	\$11bn
Chemical Bank Chase Manhattan	\$9.9bn
NBD Bancorp/First Chicago	\$5.3bn
First Union/First Fidelity	\$5.1bn
Fleet Financial/Shawmut National	\$3.8bn
Fleet Financial/NatWest Bancorp	\$3.6bn
PNC Bank/Midlantic	\$2.9bn
Corestates Financial/Mendian Bancorp	\$2.7bn
Citizens Financial Group/First Holdings Inc	\$1.9bn

Stock downgraded after news of flat earnings



High profile: Janet Jackson, one of PolyGram's biggest assets, on stage

PolyGram warning sends shares into dive

MATHEW HORSMAN

Media Editor

Music and film giant PolyGram yesterday shocked the City with news that its 1995 full-year earnings would be flat following disappointing box-office returns and delays in new album releases.

At least one firm, Warburg, downgraded the stock to a hold, while several analysts revised estimates sharply downward.

The shares lost 10 pence in Amsterdam to trade as low as 70 pence, before recovering to close at 72.8 (£29.40).

Company chief executive Alain Levy, credited with PolyGram's robust growth in recent years, said "any creative company has seasonal setbacks - we have had a cold spell in the second half."

PolyGram has averaged annual profit growth of 20 per cent since 1990, while growth between the second half of 1993 and the second half of 1994 was more than 23 per cent.

Last year, the company made 738m guilders on turnover of 7.8bn guilders. In the first half of 1995, sales totalled 4bn guilders, while net income rose 20 per cent like for like to 270m guilders.

Analysts said the absence of a runaway film hit in 1995, to match the success of last year's *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, helped explain the lacklustre profit performance. So far this year, the company's biggest box-office hits have been *French Kiss*, *Nell*, *Usual Suspects*, *Shallow Grave* and *Carrington*.

On the music front, where Mr Levy has been particularly successful in the past, sales of new releases have been disappointing in the crucial run-up to Christmas. Only the Janet Jackson Hits album has managed solid sales - although far short of 1994's *Janet Jackson* (8 million in sales), *Boyz II Men* (8 million) and *The Cranberries* (4 million).

A PolyGram spokesperson said that the 1996 release schedule was promising, and included new albums from Bryan Adams, The Cranberries, Sheryl Crow, Sting and U2.

The film division, where the company has focused increasing management attention, could improve in 1996, according to leisure analysts. *Sleepers*, the well-reviewed new Brad Pitt movie, and *Dead Man Walking*, starring Sean Penn, are among the likely hits.

Housing hope as home loans triple to £900m

NIC CICUTTI

Mounting signs of a housing revival with figures expected to show the amount pledged by building societies to borrowers last month tripled to more than £900m.

The net lending total, which does not include remortgages, is likely to be close to the total of £1.02bn for November 1994, reversing the downward trend for most of this year.

The growth in building society lending up from a low point of £295m in October and £614m in September, is part of a set of statistics suggesting the market is gradually moving off the bottom of its recessionary dip.

Halifax and Nationwide building societies have both issued figures for several months in a row showing house prices creeping upwards. Gary Marsh, a manager at the Halifax, said yesterday that the revival was likely to continue.

"We are predicting that house prices will rise by about 2 per cent in 1996, moving up a further 5 per cent in 1997 and another 5 per cent the following year," Mr Marsh said.

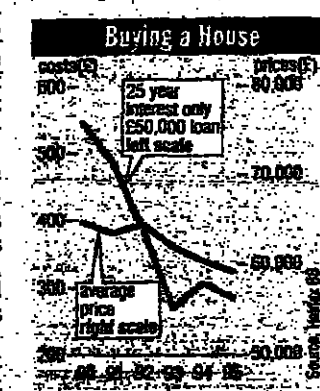
Some people will say that we have seen it all before. This time we have thought long and hard and we believe there are firm foundations for saying there will be a revival."

Mr Marsh said prices would be boosted by an end to the recent squeeze on incomes, caused by Government tax increases. Continuing drops in the unemployment rate will help fuel a return of the "feelgood factor".

The cost of mortgages is also more affordable today than it has been for years, increasing the potential for many existing borrowers to consider moving home. Repayments on a £50,000 interest-only loan were £545 a month in March 1990. They have fallen steadily since then, to a new monthly low of £284 from February next year.

Pent-up demand for homes will also help push prices up, according to the Council of Mortgage Lenders, the industry's trade body. The CML quoted a Bristol University study suggesting that home ownership could rise from 67 per cent of UK households to at least 70 per cent within 10 years.

Ian Shepherdson, UK economist at HSBC Greenwell, said he predicted a more robust



growth in house prices next year, up to 4 per cent, 5 per cent in 1997, before falling off to 3 per cent the following year.

There will be a lift-off next year, but the problem will be the General Election. A Labour Government may push up interest rates in the immediate aftermath. Up to then, the present Government has a strong interest in promoting a strong housing market."

An additional factor promoting higher prices would be the expected £10bn shares and cash "giveaway", as more building societies de-mutualise.

James Barty, chief UK economist at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, said his estimates were for a 2.5 per cent rise in 1996, moving to between 4 and 5 per cent in each of the following years. "But the most likely upturn will be in housing turnover."

Savoy directors poised for share shake-up

JOHN SHEPHERD

Directors of the Savoy group of hotels, which is caught in the middle of the £3.2bn hostile bid battle between Granada and Fyfe, are expected to meet early in the new year to consider radically changing its controversial, and antiquated two-tier share structure.

It is understood that some of the directors of the Savoy group have privately accepted that the share structure needs to change.

Any changes that enfranchise the share would virtually guarantee a sharp rise in the value of the share in the Savoy.

The Savoy group yesterday declined to comment.

A City source said that the share structure would have to be changed, regardless of

whether Forte remains independent. Forte has pledged to dispose of its Savoy shares either through a sale, or via a distribution to its shareholders. Granada has also said the Savoy shares would be sold if it wins control of Forte.

At the moment the 'B' shares, which are largely owned by the Wontner family trusts, have 20 times the voting power of each 'A' share.

This unbalanced ratio of votes has kept the acquisitive aspirations of the Forte hotels group at bay for more than a decade. Forte owns 68 per cent of the total shares in issue, but only controls 42 per cent of the votes.

The source said, however, that existing holders of Savoy shares would resist having their voting power diluted too much.

"Enfranchisement, however, on the basis of giving around seven 'A' shares for each 'B' share might be acceptable to most family members," he said.

The problem facing the Savoy is the bid is over is how to ensure an orderly, and stable market in its shares. Unless the voting balance of the two-tier voting structure is addressed, it is unlikely that City institutions would be willing buyers of any Savoy stock that may be sold.

Meanwhile, Forte yesterday suffered a setback to sell its chain of white Hart hotels. Apex Partners, the venture capital group, yesterday pulled out of talks to back a £100m purchase of the hotels by Oriol, a private leisure company. Forte said, however, that talks with Oriol were continuing.

MATHEW HORSMAN

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Thomson and Cook in crucial truce talks

A crucial attempt was being made last night to resolve the fierce row between Thomson, the market leading tour operator, and Thomson Cook, one of the biggest travel agency chains, writes John Shepherd.

A spokeswoman for Thomson Cook said yesterday that Thomson had initiated the moves to try and resolve the row. The row was fuelled by Thomson demanding that Thomson Cook accept lower commission rates on its holidays.

Thomson, which recently pulled the plug on its computerised booking system in all of Thomson Cook's nation-wide network of 385 High Street shops, refused to comment. Thomson Cook has had no option but to withdraw Thomson brochures from its shelves.

Failure to reach an amicable settlement would hurt both companies as the holiday industry gears up for the key January to March selling season. More than 10 per cent of Thomson Cook's business comes from selling Thomson holidays.

In turn, Thomson Cook is Thomson's second biggest customer after its own 650-strong chain of Lunn Poly travel agencies. A Leisure analyst reckoned that Thomson Cook sold almost 8 per cent of the 3 million holidays that Thomson sold this year's winter and summer seasons.

First Choice results Investment column, page 18

Informative:

With effect from 2 January 1996 the following rates will apply:

Mortgage Rate

(for mortgages taken out after 12 March 1995 with no interest rate discount)

All loan amounts From 7.39% pa To 6.95% pa

Equity Release Loan

(for loans taken out after 12 March 1995 with no interest rate discount)

If a mortgage is held with First Direct or no other mortgage is outstanding on your property:

All loan amounts From 7.39% pa To 6.95% pa

If a mortgage is held which is not with First Direct:

All loan amounts 9.39% pa - 8.95% pa

First Direct is a division of Midland Bank plc. Member HSBC Group

STOCK MARKETS						
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1995 High	1995 Low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	3576.90	-19.20	-0.5	3690.40	2954.20	3.99
FTSE 250	3937.40	-16.60	-0.4	3991.30	3300.90	3.70
FTSE 350	1776.60	-9.10	-0.5	1821.30	931.00	3.92
FT Small Cap	1924.26	-10.89	-0.6	1939.11	1678.61	3.45
FT All Share	1753.78	-9.04	-0.5	1827.28	1469.23	2.89
New York	5070.52	-4.69	-0.1	5207.44	3832.08	2.27
Tokyo	19140.49	-170.59	-0.9	19684.04	14485.41	0.781
Hong Kong	9709.66	-100.72	-1.0	10032.33	5967.92	3.901
Frankfurt	2239.62	-30.57	-1.3	2317.01	1910.96	1.971

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES						
Short sterling		UK medium gilt		US long bond		
1 month	3 months	1 year	3 years	10 years	30 years	(%)
5.50	5.75	6.50	7.50	8.51	7.69	8.48
5.50	5.75	5.41	5.86	7.81	6.20	7.85
5.50	5.75	5.41	5.86	7.81	6.20	7.85
5.50	5.75	5.41	5.86	7.81	6.20	7.85
5.50	5.75	5.41	5.86	7.81	6.20	7.85
5.50	5.75	5.41	5.86	7.81	6.20	7.85
5.50	5.75	5.41	5.86	7.81	6.20	7.85
5.50	5.75	5.41	5.86	7.81	6.20	7.85
5.50	5.75	5.41	5.86	7.81	6.20	7.85

CURRENCIES						
£/\$		£/DM		£/¥		
Yesterday	Change	Yesterday	Change	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
\$ (London)	1.5433 +0.0470	1.5603		£ (London)	0.6480 -0.19	0.641
\$ (NY)	1.5435 +0.0400	1.5605		£ (NY)	0.6479 -0.17	0.641
DM (London)	2.2155 +1.2701	2.4827		DM (London)	1.4355 +0.3701	1.572
¥ (London)	158.907 +0.62	158.493		¥ (London)	101.670 +0.09	101.3
£ Index	82.9 +0.4	80.3		\$ Index	94.0 +0.1	90.7

MAIN PRICE CHANGES						
Rises	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change	Falls	Price (p)	% Change
British Gas	239.5	10.5	4.6	Courtaulds Textile	373	24 6.0
Tarmac	109.5	4.5	4.3	Scottia Hldgs	525	33 5.9
Stagecoach Hldgs	293	11	3.9	Laporte	641	24 3.6

السؤال الأول

Adventure in US proves anything but a breeze



COMMENT

This retreat from American retail banking, a venture which has cost NatWest a small fortune to turn round, makes strategic sense.

It was always tempting fate for NatWest to post right from the outset a £2.7bn price tag for Bancorp, its US subsidiary. Goldman Sachs, the bank's adviser, appears to have let enthusiasm run away with it in explaining to anybody who would listen that NatWest would walk away with a full price from the sale of its US retail arm. The surge of banking mega-mergers in America drove such expectations.

In the event the sale was anything but a breeze, partly due to NatWest's keenness to take as much cash as possible and get out. The £2.7bn price finally paid by Fleet Financial, the acquisitive US bank holding company, is a poor one. It is just 1.5 times book value, rather than the twice that has been standard in recent US banking mergers.

Moreover, the premium is largely contained in the deferred consideration. That the share price rose so surprisingly strongly yesterday may have something to do with the fact that most analysts were barely beating their desks from NatWest's briefing before the market closed. Investors may take a more critical view when they appreciate the dilutive effect on earnings per share for a full year, which could be around 10 per cent.

That said, this retreat from American retail banking, a venture which has cost NatWest a small fortune to turn around, makes strategic sense. NatWest has decided to abandon those markets and parts of the world where it has little prospect of being anything but a bit player.

Shareholders should not hold their breath for a generous decision to return the capital with a special dividend or a share buy-back. Derek Wanless and Lord Alexander have other ideas, and have clearly flagged their ambitions to strengthen NatWest's UK retail position, probably by buying up a life insurance mutual. They would also like a retail fund manager.

And then there is the ambition to thrust NatWest Markets into the global investment banking elite by expansion in London and New York, notably in corporate finance. That is an awful lot of spending opportunity. So far, the NatWest team has erred on the side of the caution it says is the hallmark of the New Age British banker, a sharp contrast to the discredited managers of the 1980s who threw so much of the clearers' capital away on loss-making overseas investments and loans. It is a reputation, however, that still needs to be fully earned – and the further the management strays from the UK businesses it really knows, the more convincing the case it will have to make to investors when it eventually does spend the money.

EMU at the mercy of intangibles

Of a host of fishy numbers in the OECD forecasts for the next two years, one stands out a mile. The French budget deficit as a percentage of national output is projected at 3 per cent in 1997 – just allowing France to squeeze through the Maastricht conditions and take part in European monetary union. The embarrassment of a higher projection from the Paris-based inter-governmental thinktank would have been *de trop* for the French elite who are so intent on EMU as a means of containing their over-mighty German neighbour.

The OECD forecast was made after the Juppé plan to slash the social security deficit in November, but before the three-week-long protests that have only just petered out. Official statisticians calculated on Monday that the cost of the first two weeks of strikes amounted to 0.3 to 0.4 per cent of GDP and said that as a result the economy would stall in the final three months of the year. French employers have warned that the repercussions will continue to be felt in 1996, dragging down growth as firms satisfy demand from inventories that have been built up, rather than from new output.

The OECD is forecasting that the French economy will grow by 2.2 per cent in 1996 – 1 per cent less than it was predicting a year ago – and 2.7 per cent in 1997. Several City forecasters warn that France will struggle to make 1.5 per cent next year. As the OECD itself points out, it would only take annual growth of 0.5 per cent less than its projection for the next two years to push the budget deficit in 1997 up to 3.5 per cent – so pushing France into the EMU exclusion zone.

The OECD's projection for French economic growth is itself tempered by some particularly cautious language including the hope that the painful Juppé plan will be the last dose of medicine voters have to swallow. Come back Dr Pangloss – all is forgiven. This dubious reasoning contrasts markedly with the OECD's projection of an unchanged savings ratio in the UK, even though that was based on the assumption of no fiscal tightening next year. As for lower interest rates, everyone agrees they are necessary to revive the flagging French economy, but as ever, the commitment to the *franc fort* policy means that France must trail in the wake of the German Bundesbank.

Despite the attempt of European leaders to breathe new life into EMU at Madrid, the OECD's forecast only goes to show how much the project remains at the mercy of intangibles – consumer confidence in France and above all the outlook for the dollar. A renewed strengthening of the German mark against the dollar could prove the last straw by preventing the much-needed loosening of French monetary policy.

First-class result with Stagecoach

The Government clearly likes offering the best wine first, at least with rail privatisation. Stagecoach's successful bid for South West Trains, the first passenger rail franchise to be formally signed, looks a much better

deal than the critics predicted, both on the level of subsidies agreed and on the assurances given on service levels.

Operators are bidding not to make a cash payment but to receive one. The winners, other things being equal, are the companies that ask the Government for the lowest level of subsidy – in other words, the price for the franchises is a negative one.

The arithmetic is not exactly crystal-clear but it looks as if the bid represents a saving for the Government of well over £10m a year in subsidy compared with the payment to British Rail at the moment. If this were repeated across the 24 other franchises that are on offer or may eventually be put on the block, then it would represent a miraculous transformation of the industry's finances.

The Government hopes so. The subsidy arithmetic published at the time of the Budget implied a fall in the overall bill after privatisation (although the numbers have been deliberately obscured by taking the sale proceeds directly into the Department of Transport's operating budgets). But it is unlikely that all the 25 franchises on offer will attract bids for lower rather than higher subsidies.

Stagecoach brings financial and managerial muscle to the South West Trains franchise, which it will need to cut costs and raise drivers' working hours. Conflict with the unions is inevitable. Whether the management buyouts that will win many of the other franchises have as much chance of success is another question.

Coal Investments crisis deepens on planning setback

DAVID HELLIER

Coal Investments, the troubled mining company headed by former British Coal director Malcolm Edwards, sank into a deeper crisis yesterday as a further setback threatened to derail its talks with its bankers.

Just after midday the company requested the suspension of its shares following the refusal of planning permission for a planned coal face at Hem Heath Colliery, Stoke-on-Trent.

Although Coal is considering an appeal against the decision, the verdict could have a "substantial" effect on profits, said analysts, perhaps as much as 10 per cent. The company's advisers called for a suspension of the shares because they felt unable to give the market a hasty analysis of the decision and how it might affect the group's negotiations with its bankers.

"The revenues expected from this coal face were fairly fundamental to the financial projections on which the banks were working," Andy Quinn, from James Capel, one of the group's advisers, said last night. "It's not the case of there being a lack of confidence. It's just

that we were not in a position to inform the market properly."

The group was in discussions with its bankers at a pre-arranged meeting yesterday afternoon at the offices of UBS, which along with National Westminster Bank and Banque Indosuez, is one of the group's three lead banks.

The banks have appointed Arthur Andersen, the accountants, to give them an independent assessment of the company's prospects and they have also appointed a further specialised mining analyst. Some sources said that Mr Edwards would have difficulty surviving at the company.

The Hem Heath setback is the latest in a series of upsets to hit the company and is bound to adversely affect City sentiment as the group struggles to get a "rescue" rights issue off the ground. The shares were suspended at 25p. "This is not yet critical, but clearly it is not good news," a source close to the company said.

Since 1 December, the company has been reviewing its financial position. That day the group's shares fell 26p to 30p, at their low point, as investors

worried about the company's ability to continue paying its suppliers.

The group disclosed then that it planned a further injection of capital to achieve its planned level of production. It has been to the market three times already in the two years since it took over parts of British Coal. Yesterday the company said its interim results would be delayed pending clarification of its financial position.

Sources said the company, which was reported to be raising £15m-£25m, may now have to try for even more money if it can persuade investors to put up more cash.

Coal Investments has already said it is trying to strengthen its top management team. The company has paid dearly for being beaten by RJB Mining to the best of the British Coal fields. When the industry was sold off last year, industry observers questioned whether RJB, which bid £810m for most of the fields, had paid too much.

But RJB has managed to pay off a large chunk of its debt to its bankers while Coal Investments has struggled to match production targets.

Out of play: CINVen picks up sporting brands and equipment operation for £300m



High-powered: Dunlop Slazenger's brands are used by top sportspeople

Dunlop sold in BTR re-focus

TOM STEVENSON
Deputy City Editor

Dunlop Slazenger, owner of some of the sporting world's strongest brands, was sold yesterday for £300m. The disposal is the latest move in a clear-out of BTR's peripheral businesses as the industrial conglomerate focuses on its manufacturing operations around the world. CINVen, the former venture capital arm of the British Coal pension fund, is the buyer, with the deal expected to be finalised early next year.

The golf balls to tennis rackets operation was acquired in the early 1980s as part of the £549m acquisition of Dunlop's sports, leisure, aerospace and general products operations. Brand names include Maxfli and Carlton as well as the main two lines. In the UK, the business acts as sole distributor of Puma products.

The deal is the second sizeable purchase by CINVen since British Coal sold the business to its managers. Last week it spent £179m on the healthcare division of Compass Group. Other buyouts backed by the group this year include Automotive Products for £18m and Corgi Classics for £13m.

For BTR, the deal represents the latest stage in a continuing

focus on its world-wide manufacturing operations. Last month it sold Ticon, a UK quarrying business, to Minorco for £330m and the same company's US activities are widely tipped to be on the block.

Both deals are being used to reduce BTR's debts, which have been given a sizeable boost by the acquisition, announced earlier in the year, of BTR Nylex, the company's Australian subsidiary.

The tidying up of BTR's portfolio marks the end of an era at the company, weeks before Alan Jackson, its Australian chief executive, hands over the reins to the new boss, Ian Strachan from RIZ.

BTR's shares were unchanged on the news yesterday at 310p as the market waited on further details of the disposal. There was no indication of Dunlop Slazenger's profitability although the business is understood to have improved its performance throughout the recession.

Last year, in the face of economic slowdown and a reduction in the number of people playing tennis, more precisely targeted racket lines were launched and the cricket operation was strengthened by the inclusion of clothing and footwear in the Slazenger range.

Companies suffering 'reform indigestion'

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

The boardroom reforms from the Cadbury Committee on corporate governance have had no positive effect on financial performance, according to the vast majority of respondents to a CBI and Touche Ross survey of chairmen and chief executives. This was the view of 90 per cent of those surveyed.

The survey also found that most companies – 85 per cent – want further reforms to corporate governance to be put on hold for two years while the results of the Cadbury and Greenbury committees are digested.

The results back the CBI's view that companies are suffering corporate governance indigestion and do not want any further big changes until there is more experience of how the

existing requirements work. Nearly half the respondents – 42 per cent – singled out particular sections of the Cadbury code as needing to be changed.

And more than half – 54 per cent – felt that only larger listed companies should be required to comply with all the code, with a stronger majority of 67 per cent believing it should be modified for smaller listed companies.

Sir Bryan Nicholson, CBI president, said in a foreword to the survey report: "We must be careful that the wider purpose does not get lost in the detail of self-regulation and that necessary checks and balances against abuse do not undermine the cohesion and entrepreneurial drive of the board in its task of developing the business."

Martin Scicluna, chairman of Touche Ross, said: "UK plc

would like a year or two to collect and examine the evidence as to whether more change is necessary."

He said he was glad that Sir Ronald Hampel, chairman of ICI and of the successor committee to the Cadbury committee on corporate governance, had taken full account of this need to develop experience before considering further change.

Amec to seek new talks

RUSSELL HOTTEN

Amec is to seek talks with Kvaerner early in the new year to try to ease tensions after their bitter takeover battle. But the company said further merger talks with rival construction group Alfred McAlpine were unlikely.

Sir Alan Cockshaw, Amec's chairman, yesterday refused to blame Kvaerner for the acrimonious three week fight, saying "the hostilities were not necessarily of their making". Although he declined to point the finger of blame, Amec is known to have been deeply unhappy at the strategy used by Kvaerner's adviser, Brian Keelan of SBC Warburg.

Kvaerner's tactics, including making its first offer final, which reduced the bid timetable to 21 days, were seen as very aggressive and drew criticism from one of Amec's institutional shareholders, M&G.

Mr Keelan's role in Hong Kong Land's purchase of a stake in Trafalgar House, and his celebrated run-in with Sir Alastair Morton, gave him a high profile in the city. There were suggestions yesterday that the failed bid had sparked further discontent among the corporate finance team that came together with the SBC takeover of Warburg.

However, Kvaerner, which said at the start of the bid that hostile takeovers were not its style, was said to have been satisfied. "The client is not grumbling, with opinions ranging from Professor Minkoff's right-wing monetarism to departing member Professor Wynne Godley's Keynesianism."

Mr Weale said yesterday: "I think I'd see myself very much as a mainstream economist."

The importance of being a Treasury wise woman

DIANE COYLE
Economics Correspondent

One of three new members of the Treasury's panel of independent forecasters, whose names were announced yesterday, had an early lesson in the prominence the appointment can bring.

Kate Barker, chief economist at the CBI, said a further modest fall in the pound would help exporters.

Her remarks briefly sent the pound down by more than half a pence against the mark on a day when financial markets were nervously awaiting the US Federal Reserve's decision on interest rates.

Ms Barker and Bridget Rosewell, director of Business Strategies, an economic consultancy, are the first women to sit on the panel. The third new member is Martin Weale, director of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, an independent research organisation.

They join three existing advisers – City economists Tim Congdon and Gavin Davies and Professor Patrick Minford of Liverpool University – who



New faces: (from left to right) Bridget Rosewell, director of Business Strategies, Martin Weale, director of an independent research body, and Kate Barker of the CBI

have already been invited to stay until the end of 1996.

The new members broaden the range of expertise on the panel. Mr Weale is an academic who has recently joined the National Institute from Cambridge University.

The two women's extensive contacts with the business world fill the gap left by the departure of Andrew Sentance, an original panel member, when he moved from the CBI to the London Business School more than a year ago.

Ms Barker said yesterday: "I hope to be able to bring a business perspective to the panel. I'm pleased to note that it will continue to work on policy issues as well as forecasts of the economy."

She worked as

IN BRIEF

Coats expects profits to dip

Coats Vivella, Britain's biggest textile company, warned that pre-tax profits for the year would be slightly below last year's £152m. City expectations were at about £160m. Coats said exceptionally warm weather lasting through to late November hit the performance of clothing across all its UK activities, while home furnishing volumes and margins did not recover as expected. Coats shares fell 1p to 169p. The company, which said trading conditions would remain subdued in 1996, announced the appointment of Kirk Stephenson as finance director from 1 April. He is currently group finance director of Amersham International.

How to succeed with joint ventures

Financial contributions are less important to the success of joint ventures than other factors, such as market knowledge, technical expertise, reputations and contacts, according to an international survey by accountants and management consultants Coopers & Lybrand. The main reasons for setting up the ventures were strategic, focusing on access to new markets and acquiring new technology and expertise.

Vosper shares rise on Navy partnership

Vosper Thornycroft shares rose 16p to 803p after the company said that Flagship Training, a joint venture company comprising Vosper, GEC Marconi and Procord, had been picked by the Royal Navy's Recruitment and Training Agency as its preferred long-term partner in Naval Training.

Airbus

Yesterday's story based on German news report of a bribes inquiry into Airbus plane orders did not mean to suggest that the company itself was raided. An Airbus spokesman said: "We are aware of the allegations, but our executives were not involved."

Yesterday's edition

We apologise that technical problems yesterday meant the first page of the Independent Business section failed to appear.

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INSTRUMENTS FOR PROFESSIONALS

Business

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by TOM STEVENSON

First Choice stays on course

Back early or miss the plane is the hard-sell message being put across by the holiday companies. The reality is, however, that 20 per cent of holiday-makers will leave it until the last moment before handing over a cheque at the travel agency.

The end result is that the industry will face a severe test of nerves, and will have to resist the temptation to panic and slash prices immediately the school break-up for next summer.

If the main goal is to achieve a reasonable balance between supply and demand, then the quoted holiday companies have no choice but to hold their prices and suffer a damaging loss of credibility with investors.

First Choice's annual results, well flagged during the recent rights issue, are a further testament to one of the poorest summers the industry has experienced in a long time. Profits before tax for the year to 31 October collapsed from £10.2m to £1.2m.

However, to judge the rapidly changing First Choice by a set of numbers could be unjust. Closer analysis of the figures, which are remarkably transparent for a holiday company, shows a much healthier picture.

According to industry statistics, First Choice increased its share of the summer holiday market from 11.8 to 13.1 per cent. Bookings for next summer are down by 1.4 per cent, but the holiday industry is reporting a much bigger 25 per cent drop.

The overall industry fall of 25 per cent in bookings holds two worrying prospects. If the crucial January-to-March selling season goes badly, it that happens, the four operators will have cut capacity over and above the 10 per cent of holidays that have been taken out of the system. Moreover, it would spell disaster for travel agencies and raise questions about the logic of vertical integration in the industry.

First Choice can breathe a little more easily than other smaller rivals. Capacity has to be cut again. It has managed to raise prices by around 4 per cent – which is more than the market-leading Thomas.

The ability to push prices above those being charged in 1995 has mainly been possible by improving brand awareness through ditching the tired Charters abroad name and a cupful of brand names, and by cultivating a perception of value for money through smart and cost-effective marketing moves such as sponsoring weather forecasts on television.

Moreover, First Choice, like Air-tours, is gradually erasing the traditional winter loss made by holiday companies by the acquisition of counter-seasonal businesses in Canada, where the populace flies south when the snow starts falling and stays at home in the summer.

If First Choice continues as is, there is every chance it will show taxable profits of £25m this year and earnings per share of 5.5p. The dividend is unlikely to be raised from 3.85p, but a gross yield of 7.5 per cent on the shares, which trade at 64p, has attractions.

Growth to slow at Eurotherm

Since Claes Hultman joined as chief executive of Eurotherm five years ago, the electrical components group has gone from strength to strength. Pre-tax profits have grown at least 25 per cent a year since his appointment. The shares have risen more than fivefold.

Yesterday's results continued the trend, although there was a warning that the market would be wrong to expect such spectacular growth every year.

This was the first time in years that Eurotherm had not sailed through its profit forecasts.

Pre-tax profits grew by a whopping 30 per cent to £31m in the year to October, although this was slightly below some expectations. Sales were up 16 per cent at £195m.

The growth has been achieved by the disposal of peripheral business to concentrate on the manufacture of industrial process equipment such as temperature controllers.

Mr Hultman has been rationalising manufacturing processes and has invested £10m in new machinery during the year. Stocks have fallen 5 per cent and a steady stream of new products has been launched, which should yield more benefits in the current year than the one just finished.

Eurotherm has successfully integrated the American drive manufacturer it acquired this year. With £31m of cash, up from £21m last year, it is planning other bolt-on deals.

Eurotherm has benefited from a buoyant market in the past 18 months. The European economies have been improving while the plastic industries it supplies have also been enjoying rising fortunes. Although the current year

has started well, with orders up 18 per cent in the four weeks since the year-end, the company felt it was prudent to dampen down expectations for the current year. Growth will be dependent on trading conditions, the company said, so don't expect these kind of results in perpetuity.

All downhill at Howden

Howden looked to have put the difficulties of the early 1990s behind it and the Glasgow-based engineering group saw its shares rise steadily as the heavy loss of 1991 fell out of comparisons.

After its well publicised problems supplying a machine to tunnel under Denmark's Store Belt, the shares fell to a low of 30p but had recovered to 102p by the beginning of 1994.

Since then it has been downhill all the way and the decline has accelerated worryingly in the past few weeks as it has become increasingly obvious that growth at the industrial fans and specialist drilling equipment maker has stagnated. Yesterday's results were pointed towards pre-tax profits of about £32.5m, barely above last year's £31m, after a 4 per cent rise in first-half pre-tax profits to £11m and a similar rise in earnings per share to 2.0p.

There are clouds on a number of fronts. Germany remains a drag, despite an improvement in orders for specialist drilling machines. There was little demand for tunnel boring machines and that division has been hived off organisationally so the German management team can improve efficiencies.

In America, although aerospace and processing and packaging equipment continued to chip in healthy profits, the rate of order intake has slowed as expenditure plans are postponed or delayed. That is a worrying sign for a company as cyclical as Howden and goes some way to explaining the lousy rating the market is prepared to assign to the company's earnings stream.

On the basis of forecast profits, the shares stand on a prospective price-earnings ratio of only about 8 at yesterday's 68p, up 1p.

That seems harsh given a comfortable gearing level, the 26 per cent order increase in the first half-year and an optimistic 7 per cent dividend increase.

With a good geographical spread, lower exposure to volatile chunky projects and a yield of 5 per cent, the shares are supported if unexciting.

Simon Pincombe CITY DIRECT

Financial Dynamics gets some work experience

The Norwegian plunderers safely vanquished, Amec has further cause for satisfaction. The construction company will not be receiving an invoice from Financial Dynamics, the advisers it fired just days before the final bid deadline. It is understood that the public relations firm – which received its marching orders for breaching City takeover rules – has written this one off to bitter experience.

Given the short timescale of the bid this would never have been a big earner for the PR firm. The success fee was thought to be just shy of £100,000, with the same again to be billed for the routine work. Still, that is close on £200,000 down the drain and a damaged reputation to work on.

Instead, the success fee (and you can probably add a bit on here) goes into the Dewe Rogerson bank account – money the rival firm will doubtless claim was well spent given it had to pick up the pieces after such a demoralising incident.

Not bad for five days' work, though.

Barely weeks after it was revealed that the author Tom Clancy had lost \$1.6m to a conman he met at a baseball game comes news that many of New York's top models have been similarly hoodwinked. David Weil, 33, and Peter Bucher, 35, are charged with fleecing up to 30 of the nation's most-exposed women (some as young as 15) of \$1m through their Star Capital Management firm.

Many of the models – who earn up to \$400,000 a year – were referred to Star by the prestigious Elite agency. The women thought their money was being invested. But the advisers had used it to buy Porsches and pay substantial tax bills.

You would have thought that a mobile bank – which started



One of the more enduring refrains in popular music surfaces again – namely the long-running dispute between the Sixties pop group, The Hollies (above), and their one-time bass guitarist, Eric Haydock. Mr Haydock, who plucked for the band between 1962 and 1966, is on the wrong end of a writ from his evergreen contemporaries who are seeking to prevent him (and his new band) suggesting that they are in any way connected with The Hollies.

Sixties buffs may think they have heard this all before. And indeed they have. The Hollies, who still record as a unit, have already won a similar action with undisclosed damages. And the solicitor representing The Hollies? One Brian Eagles.

life as a converted coach and ran to a published timetable in remote rural areas – would have been a sitting duck to anyone with a sawn-off shotgun and a hole in his pocket. But Midland assures us that it is now 25 years since its deal-on-wheels service has been operating in Lincolnshire, Cornwall and Wales and there has not been a single unsavoury incident. Someone did once mistake it for a bus. But that appears to be it.

"Of course they are now modern armoured-plated vehicles," says a Midland spokesman, adding that Securix vans tend to carry a lot more cash (in case any villains are reading).

Today's offering in our pre-Christmas week series of

great executives and their words of wisdom comes from Sir Anthony Gill, the former chairman of Lucas Industries. The advice is to Alicia Bishop, an 18-year-old pupil who is about to leave Heathfield school in Assen.

"Understand the meaning of integrity," writes Sir Anthony. "Commit to it and live by it – but do not expect always to find it in others."

Heavyweight stuff, indeed. And with more than a touch of piquancy. You will recall that it came as something of a shock to Sir Anthony to discover that one of his integral US operations had been falsifying test certificates for aircraft landing gear – a practice that cost Lucas squillions of dollars in damages and much loss of reputation.

Downward cast: The OECD is pessimistic about the Chancellor's Budget forecasts
Growth 'set to fall' in OECDPAUL WALLACE
Economics Editor

The British economy will grow 1.5 per cent, considerably less than Kenneth Clarke forecast at the time of his Budget, says the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. In its half-yearly presentation of economic

prospects, the OECD cut its overall growth forecast for its 25 member countries. It warned that the pace of economic expansion could fall still further if budget deficits are not curtailed and consumer confidence remains weak.

The OECD projects that the British economy will expand at only 2.4 per cent next year,

compared with the 3 per cent forecast by the Chancellor. The principal reason for the disagreement is that the OECD is less optimistic about the outlook for consumer spending next year, saying that it will grow by 2.5 per cent, little more than this year. The Treasury is predicting a 3.5 per cent increase.

This "relatively cautious view" is mainly because the OECD does not think consumers will dip into their savings to finance expenditure. The Treasury thinks the household savings ratio will fall by about 1 per cent in 1996. The Treasury's forecast also includes the effect of tax cuts, estimated to add 0.6 per cent to the growth of real personal disposable income next year. Neither forecast assumed changes in interest rates, which were cut last week by a quarter per cent.

The Paris-based think-tank is also more pessimistic about the outlook for the current account balance, which it projects at £11bn in 1996, double the forecast in the Budget. It thinks that imports will grow faster than exports whereas the Treasury thinks the opposite will occur.

However, the OECD is more optimistic about the medium-term outlook. By mid-1996, it says, "the economy could be achieving a soft landing, with sustained output growth, the unemployment rate falling slowly towards its natural rate, and the PSBR on track towards a sustainable medium-term position. Such a configuration would prepare the ground for sustained output growth with low inflation in 1997 and beyond."

The OECD thinks that the UK will narrowly meet the criterion for budget deficits for eligibility to enter European monetary union. It predicts a deficit/GDP ratio of 2.5 per cent in 1997, just under the threshold of 3 per cent or less set by the Maastricht Treaty.

The OECD now thinks output will expand by 2.6 per cent in 1996 for all 25 member countries compared with the 2.9 per cent it was projecting a year ago. There has been a sharp downward revision to its outlook for growth in OECD Europe from 3.2 to 2.6 per cent.

German growth in 1996 has been pushed down from the 3.5 per cent projected in December 1994 to 2.4 per cent. The French economy is seen as growing at 2.2 per cent in 1996, compared with the forecast 3.2 per cent.

Even these forecasts will be regarded as optimistic by many market economists. UBS is predicting growth of just 1.5 per cent in Germany in 1996 and HSBC Markets is forecasting a similarly modest rate of expansion for France.

Despite this, the OECD said there was only limited scope for cuts in German interest rates to reignite growth in Europe. While low inflation and sluggish money supply growth pointed to a reduction in rates, high wage settlements in 1995, planned tax cuts and higher capacity utilisation pointed towards a more cautious stance. The implication is that the Bundesbank's cut in rates last week may be the last.

The OECD points to three principal downside risks to its general outlook for the OECD area. A failure to push through budget consolidation, particularly in the US, Italy and some

other European countries, "would put current levels of long-term interest rates at risk and threaten the positive effect they are projected to have on private investment".

A second risk would come from a renewed weakening in the dollar against the yen and the mark. This would adversely affect prospects in Japan and Germany. Thirdly, consumer confidence could remain shaky, leading to higher saving and undermining the pick-up in consumer expenditure in Japan and Europe.

The OECD says that EMU will highlight the problem of malfunctioning labour markets. "Since monetary policy will be set on the basis of Europe-wide conditions, the relative inflexibility of Europe's labour markets will present problems for the various regions and, in turn, for the credibility of policies."

IN BRIEF

Trinity spreads wings with £14m buy

Trinity Holdings will buy the aircraft and cargo handling division of ML Holdings for £14.25m. The acquisition includes two main operations, Douglas, a UK manufacturer of airport ground support equipment and dockside tractors and trailers, and Schopf, a German maker of trackless mining dumpers and loaders. The acquisition is being funded by the issue of 4.3 million new Trinity shares at 3.29p in a tender placing. Trinity already trades in the airport equipment sector and the integration of Douglas and Schopf with Trinity's Reliance Mercury division will create a business with sales of more than £40m.

Persona acquires Top Log for £20m

Persona, the UK distributor of PC networking and communications products, is to buy Top Log, a Paris-based distributor of Unix and other network products for £19.9m. The deal will be funded by a 17-for-20 rights issue at 225p to raise approximately £21.1m. The cash call is to be underwritten by 3i Corporate Finance. Besson Gregory, is broker to the issue. The acquisition in effect doubles the size of Persona in terms of turnover and profit.

Standard Life pushes into Paris

As part of a continuing push into the French property market, Standard Life has bought the freeholds on three prime office properties with ground floor retail space in Paris. The total value of the purchase, from AXA, the financial group, is Fr 670m (£91m).

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Compass Holdings (H)	1,962 (+1.5%)	0.43m (+0.5%)	1.96p (+0.81p)	1.1
Bentley (H)	158m (+3.8%)	24.1m (+2.1m)	25.1p (+1.94p)	7.5p (+0.20p)
First Choice Holidays (H)	92.4m (+32m)	1.5m (+1.1%)	1.7p (+0.1p)	2.85p (+1)
Howden Group (H)	212m (+34m)	11.6m (+1.0%)	2.6p (+0.25p)	0.95p (+0.90p)
Radisson Hotel (H)	0.44p (+0.75m)	0.01m (+0.07m)	0.7p (+0.25p)	nil (nil)
Woolstar (H)	---	0.47m (+1.05m)	0.57p (+0.55p)	0.5p (+0.50p)

(H) = Half year (FY) = Full year (M) = Nine months

£682m Glaxo disposal chips at debt mountain

NIGEL COPE

Glaxo Wellcome is off-loading another unwanted chunk of the old Wellcome empire with the sale of Wellcome's cough and cold cure interests to Warner Lambert of the United States for \$1.1bn (£682m).

The drugs giant is selling its stake in the Warner Wellcome joint venture, which includes the cough mixtures Actifed and Sudafed, as well as the analgesic, Calpol. However, the deal does not include medicines such as Becnasone hay-fever treatment and Zovirax cold sore cream.

The deal is the latest in a string of cuts at Wellcome. It follows the decision in June to close Wellcome's research and development facility in Beckenham, Kent, which employed 1,500 staff. In September it announced a £1.2bn cost-cutting programme that would mean the loss of 7,500 jobs.

Of these, 1,700 will go in the UK. A further 1,000 will be lost from the group's research and development facilities by 1998.

Yesterday's sale will reduce Glaxo's debt mountain, which stood at £3.5bn following the \$9bn acquisition of Wellcome in March. It is expected to pay down the debt a year earlier than forecast and be cash-positive by the end of 1998.

Steve Plag, pharmaceuticals analyst at NatWest Securities, said: "It's a good deal because it pays down debt and gets rid of seasonal products that were in mature markets."

Glaxo Wellcome said: "It shows we are focusing on developing prescription medicines, and also developing medicines when they come off prescription and become available over the counter."

Sir Richard Sykes, chief executive, said the new structure represented a "simplified relationship" that would enable the company to concentrate on research-based prescription products.

Wellcome had signed a joint venture agreement with Warner Lambert in 1993 under the name Warner Wellcome Consumer Healthcare. The deal included brands such as Listerine and Simulach.

Glaxo had signed a similar joint venture with Warner Lambert a year earlier. The agreement covered brands such as the Zantac heartburn relief treatment. Glaxo's share of Warner Wellcome's pre-tax profit was £38m last year. Its share of net assets stood at £23m.

Glaxo Wellcome's shares fell 7p to 878p yesterday. The company will continue to manufacture OTC products at its manufacturing sites to meet existing contracts with Warner Lambert. These agreements last until 1999.

Finance & Legal

A 5 page appointment section covering vital issues in accountancy, public sector finance and the legal profession.

See pages 16 - 19
section two

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section two

BANK OF SCOTLAND

INTEREST RATE CHANGE

With effect from 19th December 1995, interest rates payable on the undernoted accounts have changed.

MONEY MARKET CHEQUE ACCOUNT	Gross %	BANKING DIRECT CHEQUE ACCOUNT	Gross %
£250,000 and above	6.00	£100,000 and above	5.00
£100,000 to £249,999	5.00	£25,000 to £99,999	2.25
£25,000 to £99,999	4.75	£10,000 to £24,999	1.75
£2,500 to £24,999	4.00	£5,000 to £9,999	1.25
		Less than £5,000	0.25

MONEY MARKET BUSINESS CHEQUE ACCOUNT	Gross %	BANKING DIRECT INVESTMENT ACCOUNT	Gross %
£250,000 and above	6.00	£250,000 and above	6.25
£100,000 to £249,999	5.00	£25,000 to £249,999	5.75
£25,000 to £99,999	4.00	£10,000 to £24,999	5.00
£2,500 to £24,999	3.50	£5,000 to £9,999	4.25
		Less than £5,000	3.50

BANK OF SCOTLAND
CENTREBANK DIVISION

*Gross – The annual rate of interest payable without the deduction of basic rate income tax to eligible non tax-payers. Interest payable monthly. Interest rates subject to variation.

Foreign Exchange Rates

STERLING			DOLLAR			DM-MARK		
Country	1 month	3 months	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	15433	9-7	29-05	1000		92389		
Canada	27271	9-11	29-10	13793	1-1	94-0		
Germany	72723	46-42	14-03	14953	25-12	95-09		
France	26833	86-89	63-14	14833	25-12	95-35		
Italy	26833	86-89	63-14	14833	25-12	95-35		
Japan	13075	15-7	23-21	10157	25-29	94-08		
ECU	13075	15-7	23-21	12781	25-29	94-08		
Belgium	45559	12-12	23-21	12781	57-43	100-06		
Denmark	82629	12-12	23-21	12781	48-28	105-75		
Netherlands	82629	12-12	23-21	12781	35-30	105-75		
Norway	93793	12-12	23-21	12781	35-30	105-75		
Spain	10614	12-12	23-21	12781	35-30	105-75		
Sweden	10614	12-12	23-21	12781	35-30	105-75		
Switzerland	17769	69-61	50-51	13451	9-21	54-00		
Australia	20029	9-11	29-10	13793	2-12	95-09		
Hong Kong	15357	9-11	29-10	13793	2-12	95-09		
New Zealand	23843	20-37	87-12	13793	2-12	95-09		
South Africa	17769	69-61	50-51	13451	9-21	54-00		

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	5434	92699	Mexico	122.26	357000
Brazil	10070	18000	Nigeria	0.9344	3.285
Canada	25268	40000	Pakistan	50.835	24246
China	14501	25000	Philippines	24.825	233000
France	13379	83708	Poland	13.6582	150585
Germany	32589	50000	Romania	8.690	16400
Spain	68916	42849	Russia	71.195	493400
Sweden	14500	23000	Saudi Arabia	5.065	160000
Thailand	22912	36000	South Africa	3.9825	173450
Ukraine	36035	50000	Taiwan	42.556	35700
India	336952	34000	Yemen	1.0000	10000
Japan	336952	34000	Yugoslavia	1.0000	10000

Note: Forward moving contract rights to buy are at a discount; discount for spot selling, discount for spot buying. Forward moving contract rights to sell are at a discount; discount for spot selling, discount for spot buying.

[illegible]

UK Base	6.50%	Germany Discount	3.00%	US Prime	6.75%	Japan Discount	0.50%
France	6.00%	London Lombard	5.00%	" Discount	5.25%	Belgium	3.00%
Intervention	4.70%	Canada		Fed Funds	5.50%	Denmark	3.00%
Italy Discount	8.00%	Prime	7.75%			Central	3.75%
Netherlands		" Discount	6.25%	90-Day Repo	5.25%	Switzerland	1.50%
		Discount		Sweden		Discount	1.00%

Advantage	340%	Discount	4.25%	Repo (Net)	830%	Libor/30			
Bond Yields									
Country	5yr	yield %	10yr	yield %	Country	5yr	yield %	10yr	yield %
US	6%	6.02	8 1/2%	7.53	Netherlands	5%	5.02	6 1/2%	6.52
UK	5%	5.02	5 1/2%	5.54	Spain	12 1/2%	12.53	14 1/2%	14.52
US	5 1/2%	5.52	5 1/2%	5.54	Italy	12 1/2%	12.52	14 1/2%	14.52
Japan	6 1/4%	6.25	6 1/4%	6.25	France	7 1/2%	7.25	8 1/2%	8.25
Australia	7%	7.02	7 1/4%	7.45	Belgium	7 1/2%	7.25	8 1/2%	8.25
Germany	5 1/2%	5.52	6 1/4%	6.25	Sweden	7 1/2%	7.25	8 1/2%	8.25

FRANK	7%	50%	7 1/2%	8 1/2%	10 1/2%	12 1/2%
Source: GIB Capital Research						
Yields calculated on total issue. -- Denotes new issue						
Money Market Rates						
	Overnight	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4
Starting CDs	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4
Local Authority Depos	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4
Government Market Depos	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4
Money Rate (30%)	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low for day	Est Combs traded	Oct 1987
Long Gilt (Dec 95)	10-06	10-24	89-63	5794
German Bond (Mar 96)	98-55	98-75	98-14	1455-25
J.G.Bond (Mar 96)	101-28	101-40	101-26	2720
	101-28	101-28	101-25	30355

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	2100	2101	2102	2103	2104	2105	2106	2107	2108	2109	2110	2111	2112	2113	2114	2115	2116	2117	2118	2119	2120	2121	2122	2123	2124	2125	2126	2127	2128	2129	2130	2131	2132	2133	2134	2135	2136	2137	2138	2139	2140	2141	2142	2143	2144	2145	2146	2147	2148	2149	2150	2151	2152	2153	2154	2155	2156	2157	2158	2159	2160	2161	2162	2163	2164	2165	2166	2167	2168	2169	2170	2171	2172	2173	2174	2175	2176	2177	2178	2179	2180	2181	2182	2183	2184	2185	2186	2187	2188	2189	2190	2191	2192	2193	2194	2195	2196	2197	2198	2199	2200	2201	2202	2203	2204	2205	2206	2207	2208	2209	2210	2211	2212	2213	2214	2215	2216	2217	2218	2219	2220	2221	2222	2223	2224	2225	2226	2227	2228	2229	2230	2231	2232	2233	2234	2235	2236	2237	2238	2239	2240	2241	2242	2243	2244	2245	2246	2247	2248	2249	2250	2251	2252	2253	2254	2255	2256	2257	2258	2259	2260	2261	2262	2263	2264	2265	2266	2267	2268	2269	2270	2271	2272	2273	2274	2275	2276	2277	2278	2279	2280	2281	2282	2283	2284	2285	2286	2287	2288	2289	2290	2291	2292	2293	2294	2295	2296	2297	2298	2299	2300	2301	2302	2303	2304	2305	2306	2307	2308	2309	2310	2311	2312	2313	2314	2315	2316	2317	2318	2319	2320	2321	2322	2323	2324	2325	2326	2327	2328	2329	2330	2331	2332	2333	2334	2335	2336	2337	2338	2339	2340	2341	2342	2343	2344	2345	2346	2347	2348	2349	2350	2351	2352	2353	2354	2355	2356	2357	2358	2359	2360	2361	2362	2363	2364	2365	2366	2367	2368	2369	2370	2371	2372	2373	2374	2375	2376	2377	2378	2379	2380	2381	2382	2383	2384	2385	2386	2387	2388	2389	2390	2391	2392	2393	2394	2395	2396	2397	2398	2399	2400	2401	2402	2403	2404	2405	2406	2407	2408	2409	2410	2411	2412	2413	2414	2415	2416	2417	2418	2419	2420	2421	2422	2423	2424	2425	2426	2427	2428	2429	2430	2431	2432	2433	2434	2435	2436	2437	2438	2439	2440	2441	2442	2443	2444	2445	2446	2447	2448	2449	2450	2451	2452	2453	2454	2455	2456	2457	2458	2459	2460	2461	2462	2463	2464	2465	2466	2467	2468	2469	2470	2471	2472	2473	2474	2475	2476	2477	2478	2479	2480	2481	2482	2483	2484	2485	2486	2487	2488	2489	2490	2491	2492	2493	2494	2495	2496	2497	2498	2499	2500	2501	2502	2503	2504	2505	2506	2507	2508	2509	2510	2511	2512	2513	2514	2515	2516	2517	2518	2519	2520	2521	2522	2523	2524	2525	2526	2527	2528	2529	2530	2531	2532	2533	2534	2535	2536	2537	2538	2539	2540	2541	2542	2543	2544	2545	2546	2547	2548	2549	2550	2551	2552	2553	2554	2555	2556	2557	2558	2559	2560	2561	2562	2563	2564	2565	2566	2567	2568	2569	2570	2571	2572	2573	2574	2575	2576	2577	2578	2579	2580	2581	2582	2583	2584	2585	2586	2587	2588	2589	2590	2591	2592	2593	2594	2595	2596	2597	2598	2599	2600	2601	2602	2603	2604	2605	2606	2607	2608	2609	2610	2611	2612	2613	2614	2615	2616	2617	2618	2619	2620	2621	2622	2623	2624	2625	2626	2627	2628	2629	2630	2631	2632	2633	2634	2635	2636	2637	2638	2639	2640	2641	2642	2643	2644	2645	2646	2647	2648	2649	2650	2651	2652	2653	2654	2655	2656	2657	2658	2659	2660	2661	2662	2663	2664	2665	2666	2667	2668	2669	2670	2671	2672	2673	2674	2675	2676	2677	2678	2679	2680	2681	2682	2683	2684	2685	2686	2687	2688	2689	2690	2691	2692	2693	2694	2695	2696	2697	2698	2699	2700	2701	2702	2703	2704	2705	2706	2707	2708	2709	2710	2711	2712	2713	2714	2715	2716	2717	2718	2719	2720	2721	2722	2723	2724	2725	2726	2727	2728	2729	2730	2731	2732	2733	2734	2735	2736	2737	2738	2739	2740	2741	2742	2743	2744	2745	2746	2747	2748	2749	2750	2751	2752	2753	2754	2755	2756	2757	2758	2759	2760	2761	2762	2763	2764	2765	2766	2767	2768	2769	2770	2771	2772	2773	2774	2775	2776	2777	2778	2779	2780	2781	2782	2783	2784	2785	2786	2787	2788	2789	2790	2791	2792	2793	2794	2795	2796	2797	2798	2799	2800	2801	2802	2803	2804	2805	2806	2807	2808	2809	2810	2811	2812	2813	2814	2815	2816	2817	2818	2819	2820	2821	2822	2823	2824	2825	2826	2827	2828	2829	2830	2831	2832	2833	2834	2835	2836	2837	2838	2839	2840	2841	2842	2843	2844	2845	2846	2847	2848	2849	2850	2851	2852	2853	2854	2855	2856	2857	2858	2859	2860	2861	2862	2863	2864	2865	2866	2867	2868	2869	2870	2871	2872	2873	2874	2875	2876	2877	2878	2879	2880	2881	2882	2883	2884	2885	2886	2887	2888	2889	2890	2891	2892	2893	2894	2895	2896	2897	2898	2899	2900	2901	2902	2903	2904	2905	2906	2907	2908	2909	2910	2911	2912	2913	2914	2915	2916	2917	2918	2919	2920	2921	2922	2923	2924	2925	2926	2927	2928	2929	2930	2931	2932	2933	2934	2935	2936	2937	2938	2939	2940	2941	2942	2943	2944	2945	2946	2947	2948	2949	2950	2951	2952	2953	2954	2955	2956	2957	2958	2959	2960	2961	2962	2963	2964	2965	2966	2967	2968	2969	2970	2971	2972	2973	2974	2975	2976	2977	2978	2979	2980	2981	2982	2983	2984	2985	2986	2987	2988	2989	2990	2991	2992	2993	2994	2995	2996	2997	2998	2999	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Liffe FT-SE Index Option				
	Settlement price: 3573.0	closing offer price:		Call Total
Series	3600	3650	3800	3650
January	96/23	99/4	35/67	17/10
February	19/39	87/67	58/60	57/10
March	139/56	107/4	78/57	53/25
April	149/79	18/57	94/23	70/150

INDUSTRIAL METALS - London Metal Exchange					LAST STOCKS
Shores		Cash	3 mths	Volume	
Alu	HG	1657.5-1658.5	1665.6-67	65332	57450
Alu	Alloy	1425-38	1435-37	3551	50480
Copper	A	2840-45	2702-03	126554	29105
Lead		709-11	707-09	14295	34350
Nickel		8110-20	8235-40	15389	14795
Tin		6225-35	6255-65	8037	11725
			6700-40	26839	15750

0000	Zinc	10,000 lbs	5200	54	Stock volumes & change as at Tuesday 10 December
0001	Softest Common	10,000 lbs	14346	1073	
0002	Exchange rate	10,000			
0003					
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371	Cocon	Coffee	Barley	Potatoes	Potatoes
	LCE	LCE	LCE	LCE	LCE
Dec	966	Jan	2093	LCE	27000
Mar	910	Mar	2107	Apr	364
May	830	May	1750	May	324
Vol	8,540	Vol	5,187	Vol	380
394	White Sugar	Raw Sugar	Freight	Wheat	176
395	LCE	Shorn	LCE	LCE	CBOT
396	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
397	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
398	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
399	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
400	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
401	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
402	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
403	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
404	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
405	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
406	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
407	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
408	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
409	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
410	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
411	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
412	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
413	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
414	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
415	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
416	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
417	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
418	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
419	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
420	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
421	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
422	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
423	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
424	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
425	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
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433	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
434	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
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470	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
471	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
472	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
473	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
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497	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
498	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
499	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec
500	Mar	36550	Jan	3325	Dec

[illegible]

ENERGY		Gulf Coast		Gulf Coast		WTI		Products	
Brent Crude		Gulf Coast		Gulf Coast		WTI		Products	
195	5.30pm	*chg	Tr	sg	195	5.30pm	*chg	Tr	sg
196	Feb 1777	-008	1843	Feb 17100	-025	Jan	6pm	Spot Off North	196
197	Mar 1240	-007	1843	Mar 18226	-012	Feb	1955	Lead Gasoline	197
198	Apr 126	-002	1843	Apr 18325	-025	Mar	1955	Naphta	198
199	Vol 18,159	Index	17.81	Vol 16,003	Apr	1950	EC Gas Oil	199	
200									
201									
202									

* since 1/1/00 previous day. Year ago prices show average for week. Source: EIC-London & Houston. *Mar

COMMODITY INDICES							
"GSCI" Indices		Base date	%Spot	%Day Chg	Dec 31st	%Yr-to-dt	Year ago
Index	1970=100	19791	+132	18.06		+9.69	90.66
Agricultural	1970=100	37824	+255	2.681		+22.9	92.27
Energy	1970=100	5728	+2.07	5.87		+1.61	95.65
Industrial Metals	1970=100	16434	-34	21.63		+1.07	91.23
Livestock	1970=100	15315		18.3		+1.71	97.93
Precious Metals	1970=100	49184	+0.40	48.27		+0.85	48.28

Source: Goldstein, Sachs & Co. "GSCI" is a trademark and servicemark of Goldstein, Sachs & Co. "Close as of 12:00 PM."

	Stock	Bd	Mt	Other	Total
05	Abbey Life Managed \$	7483	7647	Lambert Life Maint	84
06	Abbey National Managed	1381	348	M&M Managed Trust	6386
23	AEWA Life \$ Managed	34132	38288	M&M Managed Income Bond Ser A	1018
23	AEWA Life \$			Metropolitan Life Managed	3727
06	AEWA Life Plan-21 May	647	2888	M&M Managed	2410
06	Aetna Multiple Investments	1102		M&M Managed	2410
	Allied Domestic Managed	1884	2210	Mutual Growth Managed	238
13	AVA E&L Balanced \$	7681	8216	Mutual Market Mgmt	167
13	AVA E&L \$				

[illegible]

0000	Equity Star Management	2635	2722	South & Prosper Balanced Invest	2755
0000	Equity Star Management	2636	2737	Southwest Capital Management	2756
0000	FD Capital	2639	2751	Southwest Investment Mgmt	2757
0000	FD Capital	2640	2752	Southwest Mutual Funds	2758
0000	FD Capital	2641	2753	Southwest Regional Growth	2759
0000	FD Capital	2642	2754	Southwest Small Cap Growth	2760
0000	FD Capital	2643	2755	Southwest Value Fund	2761
0000	FD Capital	2644	2756	Southwest Value Fund II	2762
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0000	FD Capital	2646	2758	Southwest Value Fund IV	2764
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0000	FD Capital	2649	2761	Southwest Value Fund VII	2767
0000	FD Capital	2650	2762	Southwest Value Fund VIII	2768
0000	FD Capital	2651	2763	Southwest Value Fund IX	2769
0000	FD Capital	2652	2764	Southwest Value Fund X	2770
0000	FD Capital	2653	2765	Southwest Value Fund XI	2771
0000	FD Capital	2654	2766	Southwest Value Fund XII	2772
0000	FD Capital	2655	2767	Southwest Value Fund XIII	2773
0000	FD Capital	2656	2768	Southwest Value Fund XIV	2774
0000	FD Capital	2657	2769	Southwest Value Fund XV	2775
0000	FD Capital	2658	2770	Southwest Value Fund XVI	2776
0000	FD Capital	2659	2771	Southwest Value Fund XVII	2777
0000	FD Capital	2660	2772	Southwest Value Fund XVIII	2778
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0000	FD Capital	2666	2778	Southwest Value Fund XXIV	2784
0000	FD Capital	2667	2779	Southwest Value Fund XXV	2785
0000	FD Capital	2668	2780	Southwest Value Fund XXVI	2786
0000	FD Capital	2669	2781	Southwest Value Fund XXVII	2787
0000	FD Capital	2670	2782	Southwest Value Fund XXVIII	2788
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0000	FD Capital	2672	2784	Southwest Value Fund XXX	2790
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0000	FD Capital	2675	2787	Southwest Value Fund XXXIII	2793
0000	FD Capital	2676	2788	Southwest Value Fund XXXIV	2794
0000	FD Capital	2677	2789	Southwest Value Fund XXXV	2795
0000	FD Capital	2678	2790	Southwest Value Fund XXXVI	2796
0000	FD Capital	2679	2791	Southwest Value Fund XXXVII	2797
0000	FD Capital	2680	2792	Southwest Value Fund XXXVIII	2798
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0000	FD Capital	2732	2844	Southwest Value Fund L	2850
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Lincoln HS Managed 4	2000	2632	Vanguard Intl Bond Index	1633
Lincoln HS Schroders 32	4553	4437	Windsor Div Managerl	

piggott
the fire

Horse Racing

Track No. 100-1000
Contact No. 100-1000

RAPID LACELINE
ELECTRIC SERVICE
7-16-16

BLOW 101 201 301
SUANA 102 202 302
THUNDER 122 222 322

sport

Man changes partners at owner's request

Racing
GREG WOOD

John Hales makes toys for a living, but as far as at least one man is concerned this Christmas, the resemblance to Santa Claus ends there. Tony Dobbin, stable jockey to Gordon Richards, learned yesterday that despite his recovery from a recent injury, Hales has insisted that Richard Dunwoody will ride One Man, the favourite, in the King George VI Chase at Kempton Park on Boxing Day. Richards had previously in-

sisted that as long as Dobbin was fit, One Man was his ride, but in a brief statement yesterday, the trainer said: "Richard Dunwoody rides One Man. It is the owner's decision."

Dunwoody is riding as well as at any time in his outstanding career, and only four days ago rode Richards's Unguided Missile to success in the Betwixt Cup at Ascot despite a mistake at the last fence which appeared to have cost him any chance. He is also a veteran of two King George victories on another grey, Desert Orchid.

"There were concerns on my part that Tony Dobbin would have returned to race-riding or to the big race," Hales said. "I also took into consideration that it would be the first time in the King George for both horse and rider."

"With such a talented young horse, it may be wiser on this occasion to call on the experience and ability of Richard Dunwoody who has ridden in this race on many occasions. In normal circumstances we are very happy to have Tony Dobbin as our jockey, and look forward to him riding One Man in his next race."

Dobbin made no comment after yesterday's news, although

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Early morning Light (Hexham 1.30)
NB: Nicklup (Ludlow 1.15)

there are few greater snubs for a stable-jockey than to lose the ride on the yard's best horse in one of the season's most important races. "He's obviously upset and disappointed,"

Richard Hales. Dobbin's agent, said. "As far as he is concerned it is fit, but the owner doesn't see it that way. But he has been told that whatever happens in the King George, he will still ride One Man in the Gold Cup."

Dunwoody is undoubtedly one of the finest riders ever to put a horse at an obstacle, but some punters will inevitably feel that Dobbin has been poorly treated. The reaction of the Kempton crowd if One Man prevails may be instructive.

One Man was one of 12 horses left in the King George at yesterday's declaration stage. All

the leading bookmakers cut his odds after yesterday's news, and he is now a 2-1 chance with William Hill to carry on at Kempton where he left off in Haydock's Tommy Whittle Chase earlier this month, when a series of spectacular leaps took him well clear of a useful field.

In Dobbin's absence, he was partnered at Haydock by Mark Dwyer, but Dobbin was aboard both for his successful season debut, and the most important victory of his career to date, in the 1994 Hennessy Gold Cup at Newbury.

Bradbury Star, runner-up in

the King George two years ago, was the most notable absentee after yesterday's declarations, and the dozen remaining names appear to represent one of the best fields for the Boxing Day showpiece for several years. Barton Bace, a faller at the last with the race at his mercy 12 months ago, is 3-1 second favourite with Hills, who then bet 4-1 Merry Gale, 7-1 Dublin Flyer, 14-1 Algan, last year's winner, and Val D'Alene, 10-1 Coulton, 20-1 Book Of Music, 25-1 Brief Gale, Monsieur Le Cure, Young Hustler, 35-1 Egypt Mill Prince.

Piggott's rare words lack the fire of Duke's portrait

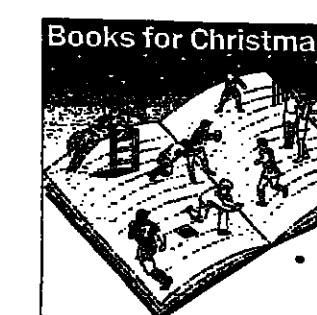
For many who have come into the taciturn orbit of Lester Piggott, it will come as something of a surprise that he has managed a 280-page autobiography. If his normal verbal outpouring is a guide, he must have started writing this book at about the time Never Say Die was a foal.

The trouble with Piggott is we have heard it all before, but for the anoraks who cannot get enough of the great man there is new material here, the minutiae that even the tabloids have not bothered to whip up into a Piggott story. The trifling details, especially of the family working-holidays, are everywhere and the tone is just short of recording the names of overdue library books Lester returned late over the years.

There has been a lot of research done by somebody here. The riding record that concludes *Lester Piggott: The Autobiography Of Lester Piggott* (Partridge Press, £16.99) informs that the jockey rode 4,493 domestic flat winners, and he seems to mention just about all of them in the main body of text.

A great constant in the book is Piggott's relationship with the press. Tape recorders and notebooks have been under the man's nose daily as much as stubble, and the methods of some mean Piggott thinks of all (Peter O'Sullivan excepted, it appears) as vile serpents from the deep.

The press are also involved in perhaps the most inglorious moment of David Nicholson's career when, almost a year ago, he became involved in a fracas with Edward Whittaker, the



Books for Christmas

Richard Edmondson finds some characters hard to recognise in a surfeit of biographies

racecourse photographer. In *The Duke, the Autobiography of Champion Trainer David Nicholson* (Hodder & Stoughton, £18.99) he does not shrink discussing the incident, but it is to be hoped his fuzzy recollection of events that day is not mirrored elsewhere in the book.

For Jonathan Powell has really got the Duke talking. The man is all in here: the survivor, the snob, the great loyalist, the bully, the champion trainer. The foreword is by The Princess Royal, and if she is just a fraction as humorous, humble and intelligent as portrayed by the Duke then the nation is in good hands with the Windsors.

The possession of impeccable self-belief is a feature of many great sporting winners and Nicholson is no different. He defers only to his father,

Frenchie, and gives the impression he could have an argument with the fellow in front of him while he is having a shave.

But whatever he is, David Nicholson is our leading trainer. It is a great measure of this book that it details precisely the man we have as our standard bearer.

The same cannot be said of *Paddy Mullins, the Master of Donnington* (Mainstream Publishing, £14.99), the biography of one of Ireland's legendary figures. Mullins has a bad word for no-one and you half expect a line such as "met that Satan at Roscommon the other day. Nice chap".

It is hardly typical of the man. This reporter's first contact with him was so fierce that the priest would have had to take a flask and sleeping bag to the trainer's next confession.

Nevertheless, Mullins is a charming story of a boy who learned to swim in the River Barrow with bull rushes tied together by twine as buoyancy and later swam in the most turbulent waters of Irish National Hunt racing.

The happiest recollection is Hurry Harriet's success in the 1973 Champion Stakes, after which Mullins showed racecourse delight for perhaps the only time in his life. Connections may have gauged their victory was unexpected when invited to a winners' reception that had catered for 50. There were three of them.

The great sadness is that what should have been Mullins's greatest moment touches him elsewhere emotionally. When Dawn Run won the

Gold Cup in 1986 it was a day when the population of an entire nation seemed to squeeze joyously into Cheltenham's winners' enclosure.

Mullins, though, felt a strange emptiness as his son Tony had been "jacked off" the ride. Worse was to follow when Dawn Run's owner, Charmian Hill, decided "the mare" should run in the French Champion Hurdle.

Mullins was against the idea and his

thoughts are aired in the chapter entitled "Death In Paris".

The Independent's former racing correspondent John Karter is quick off the mark with *Frankie Dettori, the Illustrated Biography* (Headline Book Publishing, £17.99), while another former holder of the post, Paul Hayward, helped out on *Willie Carson, Up Front* (Stanley Paul, £8.99). The Scott's frighteningly frank autobio-

graphy in collaboration with Brough Scott is now out in paperback.

The picture books include *Phil Smith and Simon Holl's Racing Yearbook* (available by post from Paddock Books, PO Box 5572, Newbury, RG20 9YL. Tel: 01635 25492, £25), in which Smith has enlisted photographic help from his fellow talented snappers Dan Abraham and Philippa Gilchrist.



Charlie Swan gets a kicking after being bumped by Dancing Paddy at Nottingham in February and the moment is captured by Phil Smith's camera for the racing yearbook he has produced with Simon Holt

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RESULTS

LUDLOW

12.00: 1. SAMMIR R (H) 11.50; 2. Ernie 13.40; 3. Hattie 15.20; 4. 9 min. 5. 21. 11.50; 6. 21. 11.50; 7. 21. 11.50; 8. 21. 11.50; 9. 21. 11.50; 10. 21. 11.50; 11. 21. 11.50; 12. 21. 11.50; 13. 21. 11.50; 14. 21. 11.50; 15. 21. 11.50; 16. 21. 11.50; 17. 21. 11.50; 18. 21. 11.50; 19. 21. 11.50; 20. 21. 11.50; 21. 21. 11.50; 22. 21. 11.50; 23. 21. 11.50; 24. 21. 11.50; 25. 21. 11.50; 26. 21. 11.50; 27. 21. 11.50; 28. 21. 11.50; 29. 21. 11.50; 30. 21. 11.50; 31. 21. 11.50; 32. 21. 11.50; 33. 21. 11.50; 34. 21. 11.50; 35. 21. 11.50; 36. 21. 11.50; 37. 21. 11.50; 38. 21. 11.50; 39. 21. 11.50; 40. 21. 11.50; 41. 21. 11.50; 42. 21. 11.50; 43. 21. 11.50; 44. 21. 11.50; 45. 21. 11.50; 46. 21. 11.50; 47. 21. 11.50; 48. 21. 11.50; 49. 21. 11.50; 50. 21. 11.50; 51. 21. 11.50; 52. 21. 11.50; 53. 21. 11.50; 54. 21. 11.50; 55. 21. 11.50; 56. 21. 11.50; 57. 21. 11.50; 58. 21. 11.50; 59. 21. 11.50; 60. 21. 11.50; 61. 21. 11.50; 62. 21. 11.50; 63. 21. 11.50; 64. 21. 11.50; 65. 21. 11.50; 66. 21. 11.50; 67. 21. 11.50; 68. 21. 11.50; 69. 21. 11.50; 70. 21. 11.50; 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Kelly Slater, of the United States, outlasted Australia's Mark Occhilupo in waves of up to eight feet (2.4 meters) on Monday to claim his third world surfing title in the Chiemsee Gerry Lopez Pipe Masters in Honolulua.

Television threatens tyranny

Murdoch demands veto rights on player transfers

Leading sports figures reacted with horror last night to the latest and most sinister example of the power and control exercised by television.

In a move which will give television unprecedented control over the way a sport is run, Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation has asked rugby league players to sign contracts which will give his company power of veto over any transfers. The revelation comes just three months before the News Corporation funded Super League is due to be launched.

"It's Citizen Kane gone crazy," said Howard Wilkinson, manager of Leeds United and chairman of football's League Managers' Association. "Sport has to maintain its independence if it is to maintain its integrity."

The prospect of football being subject to similar constraints was equally unacceptable to Gordon Taylor, the chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association. "With the increasing power of television I could imagine there might be an attempt to foist it on us," he said. "But it would have to be over my dead body."

Although the arrival of BSkyB has brought millions of pounds into the game, concerns have been expressed over the degree to which television is dictating terms to football. And the implications of what the rugby league ruling might mean for football – the only other professional team sport with a comparable transfer system – are enormous.

Under the condition which rugby league has been asked to agree to, footballers would like-wise not be allowed to transfer from one club to another without the approval of the television company which owns the rights to the sport. So, for example, if television decided it was not in their best interests for Andy Cole to be transferred from Newcastle United to Manchester United, the move would be blocked.

"It doesn't even bear thinking about," Wilkinson said. "The media's impingement on sport, while nowadays seen as necessary, is still, at the end of the day, an impingement. The intrinsic virtue and nature of sport was always supposed to be that it stood outside what other people thought. It was to do with participants and participating – and those people deciding what was right and what was wrong not only for themselves but for future participants."

"In general I would say the marriage between television and football has been a good one.

Simon O'Hagan gauges the horrified reaction from other sporting bodies

Football's got to stay, but provided it retains control of itself and its integrity.

Taylor believed that a rugby league style move in football would quickly run up against legal barriers. "No such deal could be done through the governing body of the sport without the consent of the players' organisation. And no organisation would be prepared to agree to it."

"I wouldn't be critical of BSkyB because the money's been excellent for the game, the quality of coverage has been very good, and with coverage restricted to satellite channels attendance have not been affected. But on the other hand television is a dangerous monster that can gobble up everything in front of it. It needs to be carefully controlled. Other-



It's Citizen Kane gone crazy. Sport has to maintain its independence if it is to maintain its integrity – Howard Wilkinson, manager of Leeds United and chairman of the League Managers' Association

wise the see-saw dips towards commercialism, the sport will decline and the sponsors will move in."

Television's latest move takes its influence over sport into a whole new dimension. In America, fans are used to American Football being played to suit the needs of television. It was the prospect of increased television advertising revenue that led to the idea that for last year's World Cup in the United States matches instead of two halves. As in Mexico in 1986, kick-times at USA 94 were geared to-

wards peak viewing times in Europe, so that players frequently had to endure the mid-day heat of Florida. Boring is so much in the control of television that bouts are now scheduled almost exclusively round what are the perceived wishes of viewers. That means Saturday night bouts and frequent delays in programmes while transmission time comes round.

The advent of BSkyB, which bought the rights to live coverage of the FA Premier League for £304m in 1992, has radically altered the traditional football calendar. It is a frequent grouse of fans used to full programmes of matches on Saturday afternoons that in the age of Sunday afternoon and Monday night matches they never know now when their team might be playing. BSkyB's £125m purchase of the Endersleigh League rights last month raised the prospect of matches in the First, Second and Third Divisions being played on Friday nights.

"It's going to be much more difficult if television begins to control the game," Taylor said. "We might as well cut out the middle men, ie the administrators. But what they must remember is that once spectators start to be alienated, the sponsors are not going to be interested."

The history of cricket in the last 20 years is dominated by television, the modern era effectively dating from the Packer revolution in the late 1970s when Kerry Packer's Channel 9 in Australia set up an international circuit that put players in pyjamas and gave the public a diet of one-day matches that has gone on unabated to this day.

David Graveney, the former Gloucestershire captain and now general secretary of the Cricketers' Association, welcomed the move television has brought into cricket, particularly in the boost it has given to the grassroots of the game. "It's now possible to see England Test series overseas ball-by-ball, which we never could before." His main concern in the wake of the rugby league Super League is that with it being scheduled for the summer, attendances at cricket might be affected.

"It will be interesting to see what will happen in Yorkshire and Lancashire, where cricket membership is strong. I would be concerned at what we were led to believe were traditional winter sports being played in the summer. It would not be the sensible thing for everybody to be competing for the same space."



RUGBY LEAGUE A Castleford supporter shows her reaction to 'Murdochisation'



FOOTBALL Andy Townsend enjoys a TV-dictated noon kick-off at USA 94



CRICKET Packer's pyjama game: Australia v West Indies, Sydney 1979

Game falling into the hands of the lawyers

Dave Hadfield analyses the disturbing implications for rugby league's future

Rugby league knew, deep in its heart, that nothing could be quite the same again when it decided in April that Rupert Murdoch's £87m was irresistible.

Some immediate threats of revolution, like the forced mergers of clubs to form new Super League teams, were fought off by sheer weight of public hostility. But an apparently innocuous piece of paper which has come to light this week reveals that the game can hardly be regarded as the master of its own destiny.

Despite the size of the deal with Murdoch's News Corporation, the administrators of the game in Britain have repeatedly insisted that they will retain full autonomy over the way it is run.

It was, however, a fundamental element of the deal that the game here switched to a summer season and the pay-out from News Corporation was also conditional on Great Britain, from March onwards, only playing against Super League opposition at international level.

The new revelation, in a leaked Super League 'loyalty' contract, that News Corporation has a finger in the transfer market, will heighten fears over the extent of control by a media organisation.

There are arguments for intervening in the sporting marketplace, in order to produce a more balanced competition. American professional sport achieves this through a draft system, with the weakest having first choice, and rugby league in Australia, even before the current upheaval, has tried various methods of levelling its playing fields – drafts, salary caps and residential qualifications.

British rugby league has always operated a largely untrammelled transfer system, but, dominated as it is to an unhealthy extent by Wigan, it presents a particularly tempting case for treatment.

For a controlling media interest to have the final word on who plays where, however, is a whole new ball-game as far as rugby league and British sport are concerned. Equally disturbing is the way that this provision has never been publicly admitted and evidence of it exists only on a confidential document.

There are other sections of the agreement, signed in return for payments as high as £100,000, that should cause concern. Players, both here and in Australia, where a bidding war between Super League and the ARL has produced even juicier incentives, do not seem to have spent much time studying the small print.

"Christmas comes but once a career," is the way that a cartoonist on one Australian paper

has captured the general mood among these players on both sides of the world.

Many players in Britain will be horrified to discover that another club could want to sign them; their present club could be willing to let them go, they could want to move – but News Corporation's lawyers can say no.

Another clause in the contract commits players here to 'co-operate' with News and with its group companies in giving interviews and making public appearances in relation to the promotion of Super League.

That appears to grant special access to Sky television – which has exclusive rights to screen Super League games – and to Murdoch's British papers, *The Times*, *Sunday Times*, *Sun* and *News of the World*, plus any official Super League publications that News decides to launch.

There is a notable absence of any requirement to co-operate with other newspapers or the BBC, whose continued coverage of the game, through the Regal Trophy and Silk Cut Challenge Cup, is under negotiation at the moment.

Ironically, it is this information that Sky have had difficulties enforcing this clause, because some players, no doubt emboldened by the cash swirling around in the game, have expected to be paid for interviews.

Also in the contract is the threat of an injunction, should a player breach any of its clauses, and the instruction that "You shall keep the provisions of this Agreement confidential and not disclosed except as required by law."

One player, who must remain anonymous, has felt sufficiently concerned about the implications of the whole document to break that clause.

Rugby league must now ponder whether it can live with those implications; whether they are a price in forfeited independence worth paying for a huge investment in the game.

The new Super League International Board, holding its inaugural meeting in Sydney, has decided to adopt the four rule changes, affecting the play-the-ball, kick-off and scrums, currently being trialed in Britain. The new rules will operate in the Super League competitions in both Australia and Europe, starting in March.

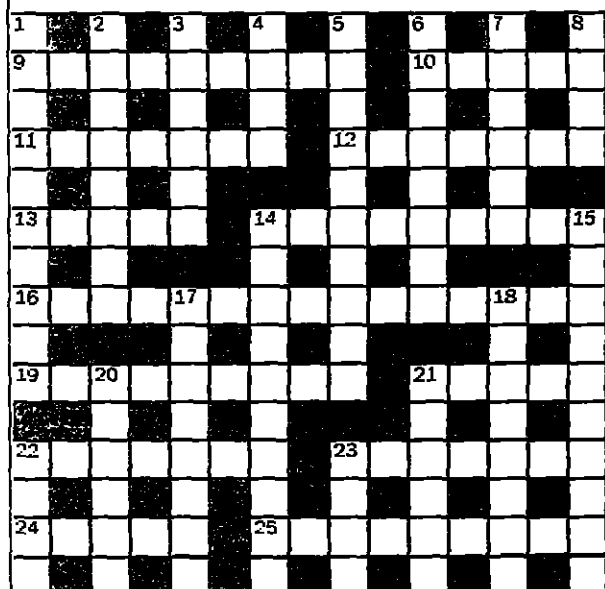
The Rochdale Hornets forward Tony Hilton has been banned for three months after testing positive for the banned substance, ephedrine. The Rugby League's spokesman, Paul Harrison, said that ephedrine was present in cold remedies that could be bought freely over the counter, but that the League was determined to stamp out any form of drug use.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 2662, Wednesday 20 December

By Aquila

Tuesday's Solution



PEPTALK NEWBORN
I E M A I E U
THROE IMPOLITIC
A S E F P U E L
PROCRITITY GENCE
A N E O A
TANGO DISHWATER
E B G P E R
BELVEDERE REACH
G I O O
OASTS MACHINIST
T C A I H N T D
HOKKNOSED CHINO
E L O E A U O G
REDDER YFRONTIS

ACROSS

- 9 Unpleasant drive (9)
- 10 Routine task for some Echo reporters (5)
- 11 Cheerleaders followed by piper, turned out smartly dressed (7)
- 12 Bow-tie knotted by Rat-tv? (7)
- 13 Coming before a superior (5)
- 14 Finished outside cigars (9)
- 16 See him changing cape, boots in cell? — (6-9)
- 19 —check with division for support (9)
- 21 Cold oil-spread, with celery starter, gives one bellyache (5)
- 22 Cushions for bumbling old fellows (7)

DOWN

- 1 Style on *The Independent*, a means of making sparks fly (10)
- 2 Licensed agent (8)
- 3 Shot shore-bird right on the bottom (6)
- 4 Jetty ripe for demolition (4)
- 5 Emulsion paint put on new church in moderation (10)
- 6 Misfortune I had when engulfed by stress (8)

7

- 7 Catbird, say, a cheeky creature in the garden (6)
- 8 Permit brides to be cut short (4)
- 14 Telling of likeable rogue with wodge about troubles (10)
- 15 Mum with no address? (10)
- 17 This stimulant could be fine in small restaurant (8)
- 18 Note, every bit of space is needed for such dancing (8)
- 20 Working for business partnership that is not stable (6)
- 23 Frank Show's play cut (6)
- 22 Bishop has run amok in party (4)
- 23 Difficult medium (4)

Foreigner rule 'illegal'

Football

Uefa were yesterday warned that their European competitions will be deemed illegal unless the controversial three-foreigner rule is scrapped immediately.

European football's governing body was told by the European Union's executive commission that the stipulation which limits clubs to three foreign players plus two "assimilated" foreigners – those who have been playing in the country for five years or played there since youth-team level – has been made redundant.

The new rule means that national associations in the 15-member EU who maintain the rule to their domestic competitions will also be flouting European law. Padraig Flynn, the EU social affairs commissioner, said: "From now on, nationality restrictions are illegal in European-level club competitions. I expect those affected to take the necessary steps to change their rules."

The commission has become embroiled in the arguments which have raged since the European Court backed Belgian player Jean-Marc Bosman's long legal battle. Uefa have said that they will ignore the court

ruling in the Champions' League, Cup-Winners' Cup and Uefa Cup competitions and insist they will not change the rules of the 49-member federation because of a court decision in the 15-nation European Union.

The Premier League yesterday confirmed they had also advised member clubs to continue applying the three-foreigners rule in domestic competitions until further notice. Spokesman Mike Lee said: "Our view at the moment is that the current rule still applies and we expect our clubs to abide by them."

However, Flynn warned that the rule must be scrapped immediately so teams can play as many EU nationals as they want in any club match in the EU.

Struggling Bolton Wanderers have the chance to field four foreigners tonight against Norwich in the Coca-Cola Cup, while Manchester City are thinking of fielding their new signing, Ronnie Ekelund, to make up a quartet of foreign players against Chelsea on Saturday.

Alan Ball hopes that the Dane, signed from Barcelona, could join up with Germans Eike Immel and Uwe Rösler along with Georgia's Georgi Kindadze.

Both the Premier League and Football League, who run

the Coca-Cola Cup, have asked them to stick by the old rules, but privately both organisations admit they could do little to enforce it.

Adrian Cook, a Premier League spokesman, has sent a letter to the clubs asking them to stand by the present rule book. "I suspect the rules may stay in place for the remainder of the season, rather than changing the goalposts halfway through," Cook said. "We are asking the clubs to go along with the rules as they stand, although we can't force them."

Cook revealed there would be discussions behind the scenes before the weekend, but Bolton will be the first to test the water tonight.

Wanderers have an injury crisis, and want to call up the Dutchman, Richard Sneekes. They already have Serbia's Sasa Curcic, Iceland's Gudni Bergsson and the Dutchman Fabian de Freitas in their team, which has kept Sneekes out in the cold under the old rule. Now he could come into the side and Bolton may escape punishment.

Portugal's Artur Jorge has been named as the new manager of Switzerland from 1 January 1996, displacing the English coach Roy Hodgson, who also manages Internazionale.

More football, page 23.

EAU DE ROCHAS

POUR

HOMME



ROCHAS